



DISCOURSES  
ON  
IRANIAN LITERATURE

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To

The Pious Memory

of

my late Professor,

The Rev Mr H Bochum, S J,

Who first inspired in me a love for

the study of Iranian Literature

this little work is most

respectfully dedicated



## PREFACE



I propose to make a very few remarks by way of introduction to this little work. The Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet decided about two years ago on the advice of one of the examiners annually appointed to report on the progress of studies at the Sir J. J. Zartoshti Madressa to get a series of lectures of a dissertational character delivered before the students of the Madressa in order to enable them better to grasp the spirit of the texts prescribed for their studies. Mr. S. J. Bulsara, M. A. who suggested the foundation of a lectureship of the kind was himself nominated by the Trustees to deliver the first course of lectures which he did in the second term of 1907. The four lectures comprised herein forming the second series of such lectures were delivered by me on the 12th, 19th, 24th and 26th March respectively of the current year under the direction of the Trustees.

In publishing the lectures, I must observe immediately that I do not pretend and have never professed to deal with any of the subjects that I have touched in my discourses completely and exhaustively. Having regard to the limitations within which I had to confine myself I have tried to make suggestions on a larger number of subjects rather than treating only a few in greater detail. I have therefore, been very discursive in the treatment of the topics which I have dealt with. I have never thought of saying the last word on any subject. But I have always intended that the students should themselves follow up the hints I have given and set about critically to investigate the truth for themselves. In order to facilitate their inquiry and to enable them to do their task in a methodical manner I have thought proper, in my first lecture to place before the students certain rules of

interpretation and literary criticism I cannot emphasize on the students too strongly the necessity of adhering very closely to those rules, if they at all wish to succeed in carrying on an independent investigation, especially in Avestan literature. It is so often said that the scholars in India are always lacking in something which the scholars in the West possess. If I may be permitted to point out what that something is, I may very briefly characterise it as the want of method and logical consistency, and, above all, the habit of attaching the same importance to all kinds of evidence, without regard to its quality. Too great reliance is often placed on tradition or on custom, or on some stray passage in some text, or on some stray remark in a work, for instance, of Herodotus, or on the opinion of some European or American savant, and hasty conclusions are drawn therefrom, without weighing the evidence on a qualitative scale. I believe that these defects can be cured only by a very strict observance of the rules of criticism contained in my first lecture. They have not been coined by me, but they have been very ably got together by the eminent scholar Dr Eugène Wilhelm, who has been lecturing on Iranian literature at the University of Jena, for over a quarter of a century.

I have made several new suggestions in these lectures regarding the significance of some Avestan terms. I have done so with some hesitation, and I hope to obtain more light on those subjects from the more intelligent researches of scholars.

In order to be better understood, I have always tried to make use of the plainest language. At any rate, I have avoided all possible technicalities. I trust, therefore, that the work will appeal to laymen and students alike.

*Bombay, 1st July, 1909.*

D. M. MADAN.

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# LECTURE I

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## THE COMPARATIVE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE AVSTA PAHLAVI AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS OF THE PARSIS

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I feel myself greatly honoured by my appointment by the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet to deliver this course of lectures before you. The necessity of having lectures of this kind is obvious to any one who is at all familiar with the literature with which you are so intimately concerned especially those of you who have to study it for the purpose of obtaining a qualification at the University. Almost entirely the literature deals with ethical, philosophical and theological subjects and with our present resources such as they are for diving into this wisdom of our noble past it would be hazardous to say that the spirit of the text becomes at once clear and manifest to all. The texts are not found in such a style that those who run can read their spirit. You require to have a certain amount of general knowledge and culture a sufficient grounding of history a sharp logical acumen and above all a perspicuity of thought and clearness of reasoning before you can safely proceed to evolve out of the vast mass of literature so discursive as it is in its character a consistent system of teaching. It would be most preposterous if I were to claim that I shall be able to expound to you the whole or even anything like the most material portion, of these texts, I am bound to confine myself within certain limits, and therefore, before launching myself on the inquiry I shall place before you a few rules which should be ever present before your mind in conducting an independent investigation and research into the Scriptures. If I succeed in exciting in you some interest in the subject so as to stir up at least some of you to attend to something more than the mere meaning and

translation of the text, and to dive a little deeper into the spirit and philosophical tenor of the works, I shall have more than fulfilled my mission to you.

I claim not the least originality for the rules which I am going to place before you. In a concise but masterly essay, "*De la critique du texte de l'Avesta*," published nearly a quarter of a century ago in the *Muséon* (Vol. III, pp 574-600), Dr Eugène Wilhelm treats of the "application of criticism and of the principles to be applied in the Avesta interpretation." The learned Professor has himself given an admirable analysis of his essay in the "Catalogue of books on Irānian Literature," which was compiled by him a few years ago. Speaking for myself, I say that I endorse every word of what is contained in this analysis of the essay, the substance of which, if not the whole, ought to be imparted to every one of the students of Avestan literature. I am just going to read the rules to you. Some of them are so clear that you would perhaps desire that I should not expatiate upon them at all. But as I shall show you in my illustration of the different rules individually, most of them are only observed in the letter and broken every day in the spirit, and, therefore, I believe, they ought not to be treated very lightly. The principles laid down by Dr Wilhelm are as under.

1. The Avesta ought to be by itself the criterion for its interpretation, no foreign ideas ought to be brought into it.

2. The passages where each word occurs ought to be completely collected and compared together in order to make out a meaning adapted to all passages.

3. The Pahlavi translation is to be considered as a resource, which, however, is not of equal value for all parts of the Avesta, and ought to be used, therefore, under continual critical examination.

4. Sanskrit, in the first place the language of the Vedas, ought to take the office of control, especially in grammatical questions.

## LECTURE I

5 The Iranian dialects are to be used for interpretation and under strict consideration of the acknowledged linguistic laws, likewise etymology and comparative philology

6, In some cases instructions may be drawn from the Non Aryan languages and from the relations of ancient writers.

7 In the utmost case of necessity when all other resources of interpretation fail recourse may be had to conjecture.

Let us now examine each of these rules individually and illustrate them by examples from the texts. The first rule says "The Avesta ought to be by itself the criterion for its interpretation no foreign ideas ought to be brought into it. In other words, it says that one must not read into Avestan texts ideas preconceived by him, or ideas borrowed from external sources. This is a very simple and obvious principle to be adopted and would require no explanation. But unfortunately it is a principle which is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. And there is a very important reason for it. Until very lately the Avestan texts remained a sealed book, entirely unexplored by scientists. The beginning was made by European enthusiasts who felt the necessity of studying the Zoroastrian Scriptures on account of the aid afforded by them in investigations into Comparative Theology. Numerous teachings of the Avesta have before now been proved to have been borrowed in the writings of other religious systems which however were explored and studied prior to the Avesta. Now when the Avestan texts began to be studied, naturally at first sight, several very striking parallels were observed by scholars between the teachings contained therein and those contained in other religious systems of the world. And in consequence, ideas which were *nearly alike* were interpreted as if they were *identical*, and thus several ideas which did not and do not exist in the Avesta are read into them. To those of you who have made a study of logic, it

must be a very familiar observation that the greatest fallacies in human reasoning, and those which lead to the most absurd results, are the fallacies which arise out of mistaken analogies. Numerous are the fallacious conclusions to which scholars have been led by mistaken analogies between the Avestan and other Scriptural texts. I shall give you two instances of them.

In several religions you meet with teachings about the existence of angels and archangels, or something to the like effect, as spiritual beings acting as ministers of God's will in different directions. The long and detailed descriptions of the Yazads and Amshāspends in the Avestan texts afford a very striking parallel to the description of angels and archangels, for instance, in Christianity, and of the gods, for instance, of Hinduism. The analogy is, indeed, very striking and remarkable. And forth comes the conclusion that the Yazads are angels, and the Amshāspends archangels — all spiritual beings forming a hierarchy under Ahura Mazda, the supreme God of the Avesta. I do not propose to give you here all the many reasons which I should like to give in support of my contention that the Yazads and Amshāspends are not personal entities at all, and that they are either abstract qualities or material objects personified. For instance, I would say that *hvarə khshaiti*, the brilliant sun, and other Yazads of a like kind, referring to material objects in the universe, are no angels, but that they are the sun and other material objects themselves. And, as regards the Yazads which are distinguished by the epithet of *mainyata* or spiritual, I would say that they are mere abstractions, personified at times, and representing some noble virtues, or the like. Time does not permit me to give you all the reasons that lead me to this, what you may be tempted to call, very rash assertion. But I shall give you one very striking reason for my assertion. Look at the genders of *Vohū Manō*, *Asha Vahishta* and *Khshathra*

*Vairya* all names of Amshaspendas. You will find them used in the neuter gender without exception in all parts of the Avesta. In no known language will you find a single instance where personal entities are represented in the neuter gender though you will in many languages meet with lifeless bodies and even abstract ideas represented in the masculine and feminine. Certainly then I may be allowed to presume that these three names represent only some abstract ideas especially when their literal and etymological significance allows of that interpretation. You may however ask me why I make bold to say from this that none of the Yazads and Amshaspendas are personalities. My reasons are these. The Yazads and Amshaspendas are all *eiusdem generis* things of the same kind the only difference between the two being that the latter are deemed to be of a higher order or rank or degree than the former. There is however no difference of kind between the two classes. Hence if the three Amshaspendas just named by me are no personalities but mere abstract ideas I say that all the Yazads and Amshaspendas must be considered as abstractions with the reservation which I have made regarding the material Yazads which I say are nothing else but the material objects themselves often pictured by a personification. Again it is a matter of common knowledge that in the Gathas at any rate the Amshaspendas are always treated as abstractions. Such is the almost unanimous opinion of scholars. Now the presumption always is that the same term is used in the same sense in works which follow, and hence when it is asserted that in later literature the abstract sense is lost and that the Yazads and Amshaspendas have become concrete personalities, the burden lies heavily on those who make this assertion to prove it. Imagery the most fantastic and exaggerated, used in connection with personified ideas cannot convert the ideas into personalities and the rich poetic beauty of the later Avesta

cannot be taken to mar or change the original character and nature of the technical names which are delineated so graphically in that literature. Personification and personality are two different things, and although there is a very distinct personification of Yazads in the later literature to which I am just now referring, it would be a too hasty conclusion to come to, that the very nature of the terms used has undergone a change. The Pahlavi literature, no doubt, does treat these names as those of personalities, but then it must be noted that the neuter gender of some of these terms is no longer retained in that language, as it is in all parts of the Avesta. Let the Avesta be judged wholly by itself, and let the presumption that technical terms have one consistent usage and meaning be followed, and it will then be very hard for any one to prove that in the Avestan religion there is any thing like a long hierarchy of angels and archangels.

I shall give you also another instance of a blunder resulting from false analogies with reference to the Avestan writings. In Christianity and in other religious systems you find a prophecy that a time will come when all the dead will become alive again, when the Messiah will come forward to elevate the status of humanity who will thenceforward live in physical, intellectual and moral perfection. And, I am sure, you are all acquainted with the tradition amongst our own people predicting a similar renovation with the assistance of three future prophets,—Hoshedar, Hoshedar Māh, and Saoshyosh. The Pahlavi literature, especially the thirtieth chapter of the *Būdahishn*, gives the most graphic descriptions and narratives of this foretold Resurrection of the dead and the renovation of the world. And this idea is read by some also in the Avestan writings. I hope to show, however, and this time, perhaps, as definitely as you may expect me to do, that this idea is not at all extant in those writings where it is represented to be, and that a preconceived notion has led translators to imagine that the same prediction is to be found

also in the Avesta. I shall immediately cite the principal texts relating to the subject and point out how the translation hitherto offered of those passages would never have been suggested, if the Avesta was by itself made the criterion of interpretation without regard to foreign ideas and analogous matters. In the *Zamyad Yasht* §§ 10 12 you have the following passage which is repeated in almost the same words twice later on in the same Yasht —

"*Dāman dathiat Ahurō Mazdao pourucha voluchia pourucha srirachia pourucha abdachia pourucha frashachia pourucha bamyachia yat kerenavān frashem ahum azaresh entem amereshentem afruthyantem apuzantem yavaefim yavaesum vaso kshathrem yat irsta pati use hushitān jasat jrayo amerekhitish dathaste frashem vana anghush*

In translating this passage in the Sacred Books of the East Vol. XXIII., p 290 Darmesteter renders the words *yat kerenavān frashem ahum* as so that they may restore the world and likewise he translates the words *dathaste frashem vana anghush* as "the world will be restored at its wish. I fail to see how the idea of restoration comes in here. 'The words *frashem kerenavān* would mean might advance do or lead forward. But the idea of restoration is read into this by Darmesteter either from Pahlavi literature, or from the idea of the Resurrection in Christianity where this concept occurs. But there is a much greater inaccuracy in the translation of the second dependent clause in the sentence viz., *yat irsta pati use hushitān*. We have in the Avestan sentence two dependent clauses, both introduced by the identical connective *yat* both in the subjunctive mood. And, nevertheless while the first *yat* is correctly interpreted by Darmesteter to lead a clause denoting motive in the sense of "so that" or "in order that" the second *yat* is translated by the conjunction "when" and the subjunctive verb *use hushitān* rendered in the sense of the future indicative. The real meaning of the sentence, according to the rules of grammar and philology



would be simply this. Men are created by Ahura Mazda, and blest with the qualities detailed in the text, so that they might promote advance in the world (*frashem ahūm, kerenaṽān*), so that, besides, the dead might arise again (*irista part use-hishtān*). Men's endeavour in the world ought to be to go on making progress from time to time, until they rise to such a perfection that they may enable even the dead to arise again. This is mentioned as the goal of human endeavour. The capacity of man is looked upon from an optimistic standpoint, and he is taken to be gifted with the potentiality of perfect greatness and goodness, capable of producing the state of perfection in which all evil and all diseases and even death will be eschewed from the world, and life may be restored at will. The Pahlavi writers have interpreted this picture of a happy ideal which man is enjoined to attempt to reach by dint of perseverance, as prophesying the resurrection of *all* the dead of *all* ages, and with it is coupled the story of the three future prophets who are to bring about this renovation. How could one who sticks to a literal translation of the Avestan text even think of *restoring* the world, or of the *dead becoming alive again*, as, for instance, Ervad Kanga renders the words *irista part use-hishtān* in the body of his translation, relegating the literal translation to a footnote! The Avestan text only points out an ideal state of perfection which man has to strive to bring about. It is, as it were, a goal driving man onwards and onwards. But this has been understood and interpreted by Pahlavi writers, and also in the Scriptures of other religions, as a certain definite event which will one day positively take place in the history of the human race. You will see the difference between the two teachings, if you are able to perceive the distinction between the picture merely of a noble ideal which serves as an incentive to action and endeavour, and the actual prediction of something which will certainly be brought about in the remote future by superhuman agencies.

A very nearly similar statement about this goal of progress and perfection is contained in an Avestan fragment No 4 in Westergaard's Fragments. You find a critical treatment of that text in the *Spiegel Memorial Volume* at pages 181--187. The translation offered by Mr George Hass in that place is defective inasmuch as he too renders the subjunctive or optative verbs *bavat bavaonti araonti* and *darayaonti* by the future. Thus he gives the following translation for the last strophe in the fragment In the earth shall Angra Mainyu be hidden in the earth shall be hidden the daevas. The dead shall rise up again in their lifeless bodies corporeal life shall be restored. If you were to stick to the text literally without yielding yourself to the tradition about the Resurrection of the dead, you would translate the passage thus May Angra Mainyu be hidden in the earth may the daevas be hidden in the earth may the dead rise up again may corporeal life be restored in their lifeless bodies "

I might multiply instances of blunders which result from attempting to interpret Avestan passages in the light of tradition and foreign ideas. But I must pass on to illustrate the second principle of interpretation. It says The passages where each word occurs ought to be completely collected and compared together in order to make out a meaning adapted to all passages. It would be temeritous on my part to say that this rule is not usually followed. But unfortunately the rule is not invariably followed as often as it ought to be, especially in the case of technical terms and expressions in whose case at any rate uniformity of usage and sense may well be presumed to exist in the old texts. For instance you would expect that the term *Mithra* has some one particular meaning which ought to be adapted to all the Avestan passages where it is used. So also with regard to other names, for instance *Sraosha Fravashi* etc. I believe you are aware that the term *Fravashi* is interpreted generally by the name of

"guardian spirit" or "guiding spirit" That interpretation cannot fit in with several passages in which the term occurs, as, for instance, where you are told of the *Fravashi* of Ahura Mazda and the Amshāspends, to talk of whose guardian spirits or guiding spirits would be the sheerest absurdity. Other connotations and denotations are then ascribed to the term to suit the context in each individual case. But that is neither the correct nor the scientific way of dealing with a case of this kind. I had occasion elsewhere to discourse at some length on the subject, when I attempted to show that all passages in which the term *Fravashi* occurs in the Avesta, would yield good sense if the expression was taken to denote *forward motion* or *action*, *progress* or *evolution*, which is, indeed, the literal significance of the word, made up, as it is, of the prefix *fra*, "forward", coupled with the root *veret*, "to turn" or 'to put into motion'. When used in connection with individualities, it is used to denote concretely the progress or advance made in the world by those individualities, or the evolution thereof. So that if the term is ever used otherwise than in its closely literal meaning, it is to illustrate concretely the abstract idea which underlies its root meaning. I have not the time now to go over the numerous passages in the Avesta where the term *Fravashi* occurs in order to justify my assertion. On the present occasion, at least, I shall be content to place before you the meaning which I attach to the word, and which, as I say, is its literal meaning, and I trust my appeal will not go in vain, at least as regards some of you, when I ask you to direct your thought at the earliest opportunity in order to find out by a dispassionate study of all the passages where you meet the expression, whether the interpretation of the word *Fravashi* which I have suggested is tenable and plausible or not.

I do not propose to illustrate this rule any further to-day. But in my next two discourses to you, I shall attempt to place before you all the passages in the Avesta where the

terms *Sraosha* and *Mithra* respectively occur and I shall ask you to assign after a detailed inquiry about those two terms some one definite meaning to each of these expressions such as would suit all contexts in which the names respectively occur

The third principle laid down by Dr Wilhelm is this

The Pahlavi translation is to be considered as a resource which however is not of equal value for all parts of the Avesta, and ought to be used, therefore, under continual critical examination. This principle is also very sound. For even a cursory and superficial study of the Pahlavi redactions of the Avesta will show that the Pahlavi translators do not adopt anything like a scientific method of interpretation. For instance, in translating the Gathas, they always interpret each line separately by itself without looking to the collective meaning and value of the whole stanza. As one of the inevitable consequences of this, you find the sense of various texts entirely misrepresented. I shall give you one and only one instance of this from a text which I believe is very familiar to many of you. I quote from the strophe which forms part of every one of the different chapters of the *Gatha Ushtavasti*. The first two lines of the strophe are as under

*Ushta ahmai yahmai ushta kahmaichit*

*Vase khshayōs Mazdao dāyat Ahuro*

The Pahlavi translator has taken these two lines apart and he has read in the first line, which by itself can really make no sense an idea which is entirely foreign to the text. And this redaction is also met with in the *Arta Virāf Namak* where only the first line is quoted. According to the Pahlavi translator the first line means "Happiness is to him by whom happiness is to some other. Thus he sees in the line an altruistic teaching. Such a teaching may convey a very admirable precept, but it is not in the text. There is

no verb in the first line of the Gāthīc strophe. There is no word for *other* in the text. And there is nothing to justify the translation *by whom*, which would require an ablative in the original. The genuine meaning of the two lines taken together is, as Dr. Mills has put it "Happiness is to him, happiness unto whomsoever the independent Lord Mazda might bestow it." I may be permitted to justify the propriety of this translation by referring to another portion of the Avesta. You read in the *Hādokht Nask* (*Pargard*, II, 2) that the soul of a pious man recites this Gāthīc sentence on the first night after death. And there is a statement to this effect also in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak*. Now it would be rather out of place for a soul fast awaiting the final destiny to give expression to altruistic ideas, such as Pahlavī writers read in this sentence. But it would be quite natural for the pious soul, when it expects from the Almighty the final bliss and beatitude of heaven as a reward for the performance of good actions in this life, to utter the sentiment that genuine happiness and bliss is his to whom the Almighty ruler Ahura Mazdā is pleased to bestow it. The grammatical interpretation of the Gāthīc strophe is thus borne out by the logical construction which you would be bound, under the circumstances, to put on the passage in the *Hādokht Nask* to which I have just referred.

I shall now pass on to the fourth principle to be followed in the interpretation of the Avesta, which says that "Sanskrit, in the first place the language of the Vedas, ought to take the office of control, especially in grammatical questions." I shall try to elucidate to you the principle involved in this rule. It often happens that on account of the very narrow field of Avestan writings, certain expressions are not so frequently met with in the literature of the language as to enable you to bring the second rule under application, according to which, you are to examine all the passages in which a particular

expression occurs and come to some definite conclusion as to the meaning which would be adapted to all the passages. Under such circumstances it is your duty to turn to the Sanskrit language where very often you are able to find out some more or less exact equivalent of the Avestan expression and you may be guided more or less safely by the use of that expression and the significance attached thereto in Sanskrit literature. Then again there are several Avestan nouns and verbs all the inflected and conjugated forms of which you are unable to find in the Avesta. You are thus at a loss to assign the nouns or verbs to any particular denomination or class. In such a case you would be almost quite safe in adopting the denomination or class of the Sanskrit representative of the Avestan word. I do not propose to illustrate this rule by examples for after all it has relation *more to questions of grammar and philology with which I am at present not concerned.* But I trust you will all at some time or other come across cases where you will have to apply this principle of investigation.

The fifth rule to which I shall immediately pass on says that "The Ernian dialects are to be used for interpretation and under strict consideration of the acknowledged linguistic laws likewise etymology and comparative philology." This rule is also very simple and it may be allowed to speak for itself. But I may yet be permitted to make one observation regarding what it says. Words have their history as much as all affairs of men. It often happens that some words which are found in two or more languages change their original meaning in course of time in one language while retaining their original sense in the other language. I cannot give you a better instance of this than the English word *knave* which still retains its original harmless meaning of a "servant boy" in the Teutonic languages, whereas in English it denotes the idea of a rogue. In cases where you know that an Avestan

word may have a twofold meaning, you should rather adopt the meaning which is found expressed in the dialects of Persia than the Sanskrit meaning, unless the context makes it otherwise quite clear. I shall take one word as an example.

In Yasna XXIX, 1, you find the verb *gerezdā*. Its root *gerex* primarily signified "to bellow," and it seems in some early Sanskrit writings it was used to denote the utterance of a loud noise like the bellowing of the cow. But it would be rather rash to adopt this meaning in the Avesta, especially in Yasna XXIX, 1. You would rather take it that the usual meaning assigned to the term, that of "complaint" or "grief," is the only appropriate meaning to attach to the term, inasmuch as the word is handed down to you in Pahlavi and Modern Persian where *garzidan* expresses nothing else than a *complaining petition*. If you had to choose between the meanings of the expression in Sanskrit on the one hand, and Pahlavi and Persian on the other, you should rather accept the latter meaning, although Sanskrit takes the office of control. For the Pahlavi and Persian languages only carry out the traditional acceptance of the word, and it is more probable to believe that the Avestan sense is more akin to the Pahlavi and Persian languages than to the Sanskrit. But, at the same time, as the rule says, you must have due regard to etymology and comparative philology. In the case of the word which I have chosen to illustrate the present rule, you find that you would be treading on safe ground in accepting the Pahlavi significance of the term as its correct meaning, for it is consistent with the etymology of the word, and is not inconsistent with the sense attached to the equivalents of the word in other languages with which you may be inclined to compare it, according to the rules of comparative philology.

The sixth rule says that "in some cases instruction may be drawn from the non-Aryan languages and from the relations of ancient writers." As regards the first part of the rule,

I beg to draw your attention to several very striking parallels and even similarities which Max Muller points out in his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* between ideas and words pertaining to religion in all parts of the world. I shall only refer you to that work in which instances of this are interspersed in different parts. As regards the instruction to be derived from the accounts of ancient writers I shall give you two examples. In the Avesta you almost invariably find the *baresma* spoken of as *frastareta* or *spread* whereas in modern practice you invariably find in ceremonies the *barsam* held in the hand. It is only once or twice that you find the expression *barsmō zastā* ; *e* with the hand containing the *barsam*. Our indefatigable scholar Mr H. R. Cama has tried to show that originally the *barsam* was very probably a woven texture in the form of a mat on which the officiating priest must have taken his seat or on which the ceremonial implements might have been placed during the performance of ceremonies. This suggestion seems to be very plausible and I find a statement in Herodotus relating to this which would lend the greatest support to Mr Cama's suggested interpretation of the *baresma frastareta*. The Greek historian says that among the Medes a kind of verdure or grass preferably trefoil was *spread* in the ceremony of sacrificing animals on that grass the flesh of the victim was placed, and on it the Magian recited prayers for some time. Might not this spread grass be taken as Mr Cama would suggest, to be the original *baresma frastareta*? But it is as likely that the *baresma* of old was twofold and had two uses — the one of a mat for the priest to sit on and for holding the ceremonial implements, and the other as a bundle of twigs held in the hand during the recital of ceremonies in the same way as you find priests of other religions holding a garland of beads in the hand. If this assertion about the twofold character of the *barsam* could be substantiated, you would be in a position to justify both the Avestan expression *baresma*



*frastareta*, and the modern practice of holding a number of twigs or metal wires as a substitute for twigs during the performance of ceremonies. An ancient writer, again, comes to your assistance. Strabo says that the flesh of the victim was placed on the leaves of a certain tree, which leaves were scattered and *spread out* in a particular way on the ground, and that the Magians there recited certain prayers, *holding the twigs of a certain tree in their hand*. The *barsam* of twigs appears thus to be an old institution, as old, at least, as the time of Strabo, and at the same time you see that the *baresma frastareta* or *spread barsam* was in use even in times of which you have some definite historical record. The statements of ancient writers, if used judiciously, would certainly assist you in finding out the significance and meaning of several ceremonial observances. But it would be extremely improper to go on speculating over things said here and things said there by the ancients, and then try to read into the Avesta ideas which may be quite foreign thereto.

Dr. Wilhelm's seventh principle is not so much a rule of interpretation as a recommendation to be followed, as he says "in the utmost case of necessity, when all other resources of interpretation fail." It is then that you may be permitted to "have recourse to conjecture" or speculation. It is a necessary incident of ancient writing that certain usages referred to therein may have required no detailed explanation in the time when they may have been represented in writing, but which, having become obsolete by lapse of time, perplex you as to what they may be. All that you can then do, in the absence of notes on the point in ancient writers, is to attempt some conjecture as to the significance of the usage or custom referred to in Avestan writings. I shall give you an example of what I mean from Yasna X, where you find *Haoma* represented as telling Zarathushtra that Ahura Mazda has designed that the *Darun* and the tongue and the left eye of an animal

should be reserved for his food. Even when you make allowances for figurative language and try to detect the meaning of the statement devoid of allegory you are at a loss with the utmost stretch of your ingenuity to explain positively what in the world *Haoma* has got to do with the tongue and the left eye. Here there is room for conjecture and conjecture would be justifiable under the circumstances. I do not know what weight you would attach to my conjecture on the point. But I shall venture to speculate on the question. You know that the drink of the *Haoma* is health-giving that it is, as it were a tonic beverage. Now it is a matter of common knowledge that tonic beverages require as a necessary accompaniment very solid and substantial food. The eye and the tongue are as I believe you are aware very substantial food and I am tempted to imagine that it was the usual recommendation by the physicians of the Avestan age to people to drink the juice of the *Haoma* as a tonic and to partake of the tongue and the eye of animals as nutritious food, to be partaken of side by side with the drink of the *Haoma*. I repeat that I am merely speculating. It is not at all wrong or unscholarly to say on some occasions that there are certain things in the ancient texts which in the absence of proper materials and resources, you are unable to explain or account for. And I should speaking for myself plead my inability to explain a thing rather than be compelled to give a conjectural opinion based on pure speculation. When all resources fail therefore you would be justified in saying *am lu roshan* (it is not clear to me) as the Pahlavi commentators are known to have done on several occasions.

I am conscious that I have thus far only entered on a discursive treatment of stray Avestan subjects in illustrating the principles which I say ought to be your guide in your attempt to interpret the spirit of the Avestan texts. My only excuse is the importance of laying down definite rules to be

followed in the interpretation of the spirit of the Avestan texts, and I hope I shall not be deemed to have had no justification for addressing you at some length on this question, since it is my duty to unfold to you, in a dissertative form, the spirit of the Avestan writings <sup>6</sup>

I shall, however, pass on to the proper subject which I have announced for this evening. I propose to place before you a few remarkable characteristics of the literatures of the Avesta and Pahlavi languages, and to form therefrom a comparative estimate of the value and importance of the two literatures.

The very first observation which suggests itself to me is this. You read the texts written in these two languages mainly with a motive, and that motive is to find out the teachings contained therein — the teachings about the religion you all profess to follow and to hold in reverence. In that connection your main attention would naturally be directed to the oldest of your writings, the authorship of which you are able, more or less correctly, to ascribe to the founder of the religion or to his immediate disciples. These writings are very few indeed, and are contained in the seventeen chapters of the Yasna which have received the distinctive appellation <sup>or</sup> of the Gāthās. I am not one of those who believe that the prophet is bound to comprise in his work all and sundry branches of knowledge to which nothing requires to be added as a supplement. Indeed, if you take your prophet as human, — and most decidedly he is delineated as human in your oldest and most genuine books — then he is subject to one infirmity to which all men are alike subject. Art is long, and life is short. And the prophet can during his life but give you only a system, — from his standpoint a complete system — of religion, but which system completely receives expansion and requires to be elucidated and commented upon from time to time. And, side by side with this growth and expansion of the religious writings, there are

engrafted on the system foreign elements, sometimes consistent with and helping to elucidate the spirit of the original writings and sometimes at variance with the tenor of the original teachings. The process is slow but it is steady and sure, and one can at certain points draw a line to mark out the authoritativeness or otherwise of different texts. In this connection it will not be out of place to quote a very pertinent observation from Ragozin's *Media* (Story of the Nations Series, pp 108 109) The author says The fact is that all history shows how impossible it is for any religion or doctrine to maintain itself on the level of absolute loftiness and purity on which it was placed by the founder or reformer. He is one man in a nation above and ahead of his time his race, nay mankind in general so are, in a lesser degree his immediate followers, his first disciples. But the mass of those who learn from him and them — the herd — is composed of average minds, which after the first enthusiasm has cooled and the novelty has worn off, feels but ill at ease on an altitude that makes too great demands on their spiritual powers. Then there are the old habits, which as the strain is irksomely felt, reassert themselves with all the sacredness of early nay ancestral associations — all the sweetness of familiarity. Then begins the work of adaptation the new religion is half unconsciously fitted to the old there is a gradual revival of ancient ideas, ancient poetry ancient forms and usages, — and scarce a lifetime has elapsed after the reformer has passed away when his work is changed beyond recognition and the doctrine and practice of those who still call themselves his followers, have become a medley of what he taught and the very things against which he rose in protest.

I say that I agree with the main principle which underlies the remarks made by this learned writer. Indeed, these remarks must appear correct to those who can trace the psychological development and growth of human sentiment

in religious affairs. But one must not exaggerate the effect of these observations. If pushed to their extreme limit, one would come to the absurd result that if you wish to get enlightened about the Zoroastrian religion, you should rely on the Gāthās and the Gāthās alone, and that all that literature which is posterior to the Gāthās is full of exotic ideas which only disguise the genuine teaching of the Avesta, and as such, not worthy of credence or authority. I should rather ask you to think twice before you accept, for instance, the opinion of Dr. Mills whose judgment on the point is entirely uncompromising. He says "In the Gāthās all is sober and real . . . With the Yasna of Seven Chapters which ranks next in antiquity to the Gāthās, we already pass into an atmosphere distinct from them" As I said a moment ago this is the language of exaggeration. The spirit of a religion is to be judged not by the language in which the teachings are cast, but by the *ideas* and *doctrines* which it suggests and lays down. I should like to know in what particular there is a degeneration from the sober and real *ideas* of the Gāthās in any part of the *Yasna Haptanghāiti*. There is no doubt a remarkable difference in the style. The sublimity and majesty of the Gāthic style is replaced by the grandeur and beauty of diction of the later composition. But the thoughts remain the same throughout, — I mean, there is nothing which may be characterised as a departure from the sober rationalism of the Gāthās. And I would make this remark for almost the whole of the Avesta, even for the Yasht literature in which some scholars see a polytheistic element. I shall not deny, what is matter of common knowledge, at any rate to you, that there is a very strong personification of the Yazads and Amshāspends in the Yasht literature, and that their characteristics and functions are painted in the richest and most gorgeous colours. But nowhere is the superiority and supremacy of the Creator Ahura Mazda forgotten. It was at one time a cant with unsympathetic and carping critics to call Zoroastrians by the

denomination of fire worshippers, and that cant has survived till modern times. But you have now at least this consolation that what with your emphatic protest against that remark, and what with the reasons which were offered for the reverence paid to fire you no longer hear the term fire worshippers employed in regard to Zoroastrians by any body who has any claim whatever to be named a student of your Scriptures. And if the Parsis are not fire-worshippers, much less are they worshippers of the wind or water or of any other element. Certainly they are not polytheists and the Avestan writings and the Yasht literature do not tend to polytheism. I may venture to give what appears to me to be the likely reason for the comment that the teaching in the Yashts verges on polytheism. The Yasht literature deals with the praises of individual Yazads and Amshaspendas, whose excellences and merits are sung with glowing pictures of their greatness. Now when you are talking of any particular element in nature, or of any virtue which you have personified, you would be quite justified if you, at the same time sang the praises of the Creator for having blest you with the natural object and that virtue. But it would be no sin if one restricted himself to the theme in hand, and allowed the reader or hearer to admire the greatness and goodness of the Almighty Giver of those blessings inferentially. Now the Yashts do sometimes expressly speak forth the sentiments of gratitude which you owe to Ahura Mazda, and sometimes they do not, for the occasion does not necessitate an allusion to Ahura Mazda. But it does not follow if when talking of B and C you do not refer to A that you depreciate A or that you consider B and C to be on the same level of greatness with A. And so likewise it does not follow that if in the different Yashts you see some importance attached to Yazads and Amshaspendas, and their praises are sung that they are apotheosized. I hope I am not using a very strong expression when I say that it is as much a cant to

regard the Yashts as savouring of polytheism, as it is to call Zoroastrians by the appellation of fire-worshippers

But I am not going rashly to deny the presence of exotic elements and clear indications of foreign influence in some parts of the later Avesta. The late Mgr De Harlez has succeeded in tracing some Turānian elements in the Avesta, and you would be interested to learn that the practice of holding a *barsam* of twigs has its counterpart, and very likely, its origin, amongst the Turānian peoples who used divining rods in ceremonies with the object of keeping away the evil spirits from the altar and from the officiator of the ceremony. I may venture to say that most of the ceremonial requisites and implements which all appear to have an entirely exotic character about them might be ascribed to foreign influence. The contemporaries of Zarathushtra seem to have given up pastoral life in favour of agriculture and manual labour and commerce and other branches of industry under the guidance of the prophet's teachings. And the growth of industries and commerce must have brought in its train, intercommunication with the nations in the near and distant vicinity of Iran. And whilst Iran contributed not a little to form the ethical and philosophical notions in those nations, it did also borrow some foreign ideas which must have percolated into its religious system

Our estimation, then, of the later Avestan writings must certainly be lower than that of the Gāthās, and this remark would apply with all the greater force to the writings which are more recent — I mean, the Pahlavi, Pāzend and Persian writings. I began my arguments about the question I am now discussing by saying that you study the literatures in the Avesta and Pahlavi languages with a motive — the motive of discovering, as far as possible, in the original sources, the doctrines of the religion you profess to follow. In doing so you take the assistance of the Pahlavi writings as a guide

for the elucidation of Avestan passages, but, as I pointed out in the introductory part of my address to you, those writings are to be used under ' continual critical examination.' And why is this so? I believe it would be extremely improper for any one to suggest, considering the fragmentary condition of your ancient writings that you must have no concern whatsoever with the Pahlavi writings which come too far behind the times of Zarathushtra. The extremist who says that the Gathas are the only extant writings that can be ascribed to the age of Zarathushtra and who will not therefore care to supplement the Gathas by anything from other texts may well be left to himself. The fragmentary character of the Gathas the difficulty and obscurity of their style and diction force you to look elsewhere for supplementing your knowledge of the religion. And where could you expect to find that supplement better than in the later Avesta which must contain a reflex of the tradition in which the lost portion of Zarathushtra's teachings must have survived, and which must have been transcribed in those later compositions? You may presume that the traditional opinions at least for a few generations after the date of the prophet would not be very greatly at variance with much less antagonistic to, the teachings of the founder of the religion who is referred to in the later Avesta with feelings of deep respect and veneration. But you cannot say that this condition of things can last long though I am not prepared to accept the rather hyperbolical way of expression which Ragozin has adopted stating that scarcely a generation passes after the time of the prophet when his teachings become discoloured. Ideas that are trusted to tradition for their preservation are bound to be handed down with permutations and combinations and therefore, when you can clearly trace foreign elements in Avestan writings, you must subject them to a very critical test before you accept them as genuine teachings of the prophet and as part and parcel of his religious system. You seek to



find out in the Gāthās the truth about your religion. And in order to satisfy your curiosity to know as much as possible of that truth, you have recourse to other Avestan writings besides. That is a very laudable motive. But that motive would be entirely frustrated if you accepted indiscriminately anything and everything contained in the later Avesta.

Similarly, you have to utilise the Pahlavi writings with greater caution and "under constant critical examination", as Dr Wilhelm would say. The Pahlavi writings are not the best nor quite authoritative resources, but they are resources which facilitate the study of the truths of the religion, and, if utilised with discretion exercised judicially and judiciously, they can do no harm and will always be of some assistance to the reader. The dogmas contained in the Pahlavi writings need not be taken as authoritative, for in many cases Pahlavi authors have amalgamated foreign elements in their teachings. The connection of the people of the Avestan age with other nations is not clearly proved, but you have historical evidence of the intercourse which Persia had with so many different countries of Asia and Europe in later times. The Achæmenian monarchs, actuated by the desire of conquest and aggrandisement, professing the cant which you see repeated in modern history, of building a scientific frontier for their Empire, penetrated the confines of India on the one side, and the heart of Greece on the other. Then came the retaliation from the side of the Greeks, resulting in the ravages of the Macedonian conqueror, Alexander the Great, who with a vandalism quite characteristic of those times, destroyed the most precious and cherished of your ancient records. The Pārthians and Sāssānians who followed the Achæmenides continually received ambassadors at their courts from foreign parts, and you also have preserved for you a few notes of formal disquisitions held on religious questions at those courts. Although the reports which you have, lead you to believe that the Zoroastrian Dasturs invariably scored a victory in the debates, you would

rather suspect from what you read in the Pahlavi books and the ideas which you see expressed therein that some of the arguments of the foreign disputants must have weighed with and influenced the Persians. Besides, you find it recorded in history that vigorous attempts were made in those times to promulgate the religion in foreign parts. And it is a familiar observation that in supplanting the religions of other nationalities, you often make concessions and borrow some of the ideas of those nationalities. As Ragozin observes. No new religion however superior ever supplants an older one without concessions in making them it grows familiar with the lower standard and — such is the innate propensity of things to deterioration — inevitably becomes tainted with the very beliefs and practices which it is its loftier mission to abolish. Greece, when conquered by Rome, subjugated the conquered country to whom she transferred all her ideas and doctrines. And the ideas prevalent in one part of an Empire will perforce percolate into other parts of the Empire.

The reason why as I said you would have to treat even later Avestan texts as authoritative writings containing religious tenets is, that they are presumed to be the reflex of the traditional views on religious matters prevailing in Iran immediately after or at any rate, not very long after the time of the prophet. The importance and the value would diminish as you come to more recent works, because the changes of time and circumstances bring about changes in ideas and the tradition incorporates into itself the changed spirit of the times. I shall apply this method of reasoning to the Pahlavi texts. Supposing some points on religious matters lingered merely in tradition even till the times of the Pahlavi writers without being reduced into writing before that period is it possible for you to imagine that such a tradition would remain immaculate and free from the admixture of ideas alien to the spirit of the original religion when as a matter of fact, the Pahlavi writers are imbued with the spirit of their times, and when foreign

ideas are known as a fact to have influenced the religious beliefs of the times? The only standpoint from which you would consider the later Avestan texts as authoritative Scriptures does not apply to the Pahlavi writings, except in a very far-fetched manner. And I would not hesitate to say 'that the Pahlavi writings, when they teach new ideas, ought to be put to a very strict investigation before you accept the teachings contained in them as a part of your religion.

But this is not all. You find on this point some remarkable admissions made by Pahlavi writers themselves which are relevant to the present inquiry. You are told in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak* that on account of the offensive and defensive wars in which the people of Iran had engrossed themselves for a long time, and the consequential disasters which befell the country, the people were very ill at ease, and they had begun to lose all faith in the religion,— so much so that even the Dasturs and the Pillars of the Faith could obtain no respect. A wave of scepticism began to pass over the country. To save the situation, then, and to re-instate the faith of the masses in the religion, two different methods were adopted. The one was the legitimate method of compiling the old texts in the Avesta, translating them into the Pahlavi dialect, and elucidating what appeared to be the knotty points in the older texts by means of commentaries. The other method was to induce a feeling of reverence in the people for the high priests by means of miracles, and you find Ādarbād Māhrospend undergoing an ordeal — not a hair on his body being injured although a quantity of molten brass was poured on his breast,— and you find also Artā Virāf undertaking a journey to the spiritual regions, and, on his return, assuring the people that "there was but one path — that of righteousness — and all others were no paths". Of course what righteousness means was to be judged from the catalogue of virtues and vices which he brings from the other world. I believe you will agree with me when I say that writings which are dictated

under force of circumstances with the motive of pleasing the masses and of restoring their faith even by supernatural means, are bound to be coloured by prejudices and pre-conceived opinions, and cannot deserve the same weight as opinions expressed when no particular controversy arose. Most of the opinions expressed in the Pahlavi writings are *post rem motam* — after a controversy had arisen — and they thus lose a good deal of their weight.

I am not however going to ask you to disregard the whole of the Pahlavi literature. I have read with great admiration the logical disputations contained for instance in the *Shikand Gumanik Vijar* which refutes the heretical doctrines of apostates like Mani and Mazdak and the simple rationalism of parts of the *Dastan i Dinik* has evoked in me sentiments of admiration for the liberality and high mindedness which appear to have been the prominent characteristics of the writer of that work. Remember that although kingdoms were won and kingdoms were lost, the nationality of Iran was not changed and that the national religion bore the same designation of Zoroastrian. If then there is something in a Pahlavi work that is not inconsistent with reason and if it speaks of matters on which the Avesta is entirely silent, it must claim your attention. It is the business of the naturalist to read

“Sermons in stones books in the running brooks”

And good in everything

And it is your business as students and scholars to distil the essence of the tradition contained in all your books and to see what sermons you can get out of scrolls of papyrus.

If you apply the same principles of reasoning which I have urged in asking you to judge the relative and comparative merits of the different Avesta and Pahlavi texts, also to the much more recent writings in modern Persian and in other languages, you would come to the conclusion that these latter works are not to be treated as any authorities at all but that, at best, they might offer some useful suggestions to you which may at times, deserve attention and weight.

Before I close my present discourse, I shall place before you a few points of comparison between the Avesta and Pahlavi writings.

1. In the first place you find that whereas all the Avestan works deal with religious or ethical matters, there are some works among the extant Pahlavi writings which refer entirely to secular topics. Perhaps most of you are acquainted with the interesting little monograph entitled *Mādīgān-ī-Chatrang*, dealing with the game of chess

2. As regards the method of treatment of ideas adopted in the Avestan and Pahlavi texts respectively, you will find that the former are characterised, on the whole, by a subjectivity, whereas the Pahlavi writings are characterised by an objectivity. The ideas, such as they are, are communicated to you directly in the Avesta, whereas in the Pahlavi literature, you find a roundabout method of approaching the subject, and extremely fanciful similes are noted down. I believe you are somewhat familiar with the way in which modern Persian poetry, and even prose, revels in fanciful pictures. The Pahlavi literature seems to have led the way to this peculiarity of style. The similes which you find in the Pahlavi literature, however, sometimes verge on the commonplace, and sometimes they are so far-fetched that you have to exercise your imagination to a somewhat extraordinary degree to grasp the point of comparison. In a short composition entitled "*Madām Chēm-ī-Darūn*," i e, "On the Symbolism of the Darūn," you find a fanciful comparison of the Darūn with the circumference of the world — a comparison which can appeal only to speculative heads. In the Pahlavi literature you will also seek in vain for genuine imagery and grandeur of style, such as you meet with in the Avestan literature.

3. As regards the philosophical tenor of the writings, you will find without any exception the most sensible and rational teachings given in the Avesta. But, I am afraid, you cannot say so of all the Pahlavi writings. The Avestan idea of the

*Frashakereti* which declares that all men can reach a stage of moral perfection by their own unaided efforts, and whereby each man is declared to have the potentiality in him to be a *saoshyant* or benefactor of the human race is translated into the theory of Resurrection and the fanciful picture of three future prophets to arise at distant periods of time, taking their birth mysteriously from miraculously preserved seeds of the prophet Zarathushtra. The Avestan ideal appeals itself to you by its optimistic rationalism whereas the Pahlavi ideal and final goal of things in the universe make an appeal to your sense of the marvellous.

4 Then again the Avestan writings attract your attention by their unerring logical acumen and consistency and by the principles of natural justice fairness and equality which they lay down for the regulation of human conduct. For instances of logical consistency I shall only refer you to various chapters in the *Vendidad* where you have a very logical sequence of the principles of purification and ceremonial laid down in order to emphasize the fundamental doctrine of maintaining the body in a pure state in order to keep the mind pure. And you will also find interspersed in the same work numerous instances where the author shows how he is actuated by fairness and equality and natural justice. For instance, Mazdayasnians are enjoined to build *astodans* of stone or mortar if they can afford it but if not, the bones of the corpse, after it is devoured by the vultures, may be secreted, wrapped up only in the clothes last worn by the deceased. "*Char toksha achar khursand*" (if there is a remedy all right but where there is no remedy you must be content) this is the maxim preached and practised in the Avesta. The laws about the disposal of the dead, and the penalties imposed for their breach are not applicable to those who are not versed in the laws, and who are not Mazdayasnians. This is a very fair teaching indeed, for it does not lay down the very questionable principle that all but believers in

the religion of Zarathushtra, are doomed to perdition. The offences against the rules about the disposal of the dead, etc., are *mala prohibita* — evils because they are forbidden, not *mala in se* — evils against the natural order of things. It is but fair, then, that the operation of the rules is restricted to the case only of those to whom such special rules are expressly made known. But this fairness and impartiality is not always to be found in the Pahlavi writings. For instance, in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak* you read that a river is formed in the other world by the tears of people who offer lamentations after their dead relatives, and that river comes in the way of those souls of the dead reaching their final resting place, for they have first to cross the river before they can find their way further. Would it be fair that the souls of the dead should be subjected to difficulties on account of the frailty of the near relatives who are so prone to shed tears for their near and dear departed ones? And, mind you, these difficulties are said to exist in the other world, where you go to meet your final doom, where the seat of Righteousness and Justice abides, where the scales of justice weigh sins and good deeds, however infinitesimal they may be, before pronouncing the final verdict. Unfortunately, you do not always find the Pahlavi writers observing a consistent mode of reasoning, and this is one out of several such instances of inconsistencies. Just a moment ago I observed that the Avesta does not lay down the questionable principle that all but Zoroastrians are doomed to perdition. In fact, all men are equal in the eye of the Mazdayasniān law, and reward and punishment are awarded in the other life, not from considerations of the beliefs of men, but from considerations of the righteousness or otherwise of their thoughts, words and actions, and all men have equal chances of obtaining the highest heaven or the lowest hell. But this principle of entire impartiality seems not to have commended itself to Pahlavi writers, and you are told in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak* that the highest heaven, the *Garotmān*, is reserved exclusively for Zoroastrians.

5 The Avestan writings always make an appeal to your reason. The Pahlavi writings appeal oftener to your sentiment. For instance, the Avesta represents Zarathushtra's greatness by depicting him in his true colours, with all the difficulties and shortcomings to which as a man he was subject. And you are asked to express your admiration and esteem for him for the manly way in which he succeeded in surmounting all the gigantic impediments that lay in his way. The Pahlavi writings, however contain a long and detailed account of the various so called "Marvels" of Zarathushtra. You have the strange story that his conception and birth was the result of a special divine scheme in which the archangels were the principal actors. You are told of the Divine Revelation vouchsafed to him in the shape of 21 *Nasks* and of his manifold miraculous deliverances from the dangerous traps laid by his enemies to bring about his end and finally you have to crown this the prophecy about three prophets destined to be born of his seed. If you judge of the genuineness or otherwise of the life-story of the prophet narrated in the Pahlavi literature from the standpoint of the Avesta you would I believe, come to the conclusion that this fantastic story must have been communicated to the Pahlavi writer who first jotted it down on paper through the machinery of some special Divine Revelation. There is real greatness in a prophet undertaking manly struggles against his enemies and achieving triumphs in brave strife, whereas I fail to see any greatness in a prophet who is pictured to me as a mere figurehead and a tool and who is made only the instrumentality of fulfilling a divine scheme in which the real actors are spiritual beings. You see here a difference—and quite a characteristic difference—between the Avestan and the Pahlavi writings. You read in the *Diinkard* over and over again that the Dasturs had at different times to enter into disputations with sceptics and atheists and others and accounts of a few such disputations with the respective questions and answers are detailed. But you will notice that it often



happens that questions are entirely shifted, and instead of a straight and short answer to end the dispute, you will see a long-winded and evasive answer, often 'without any rhyme or reason about it, where the object of the Dastur appears clearly to be to talk out the adversary. Speaking for myself, I say that I have entirely failed to see any reason, for instance, in some of the answers given to the apostate Abālsh by a learned Dastur, one of the known compilers of the *Dinkard*, viz, Dastur Ādar Farnbag Farkhozād, who is reported in the *Gajastak-i-Abālsh* to have given satisfaction to all his hearers by the solution he offered of the queries put to him.

I shall now close my theme which has become longer than I had anticipated. But before I resume my seat, I should like to address an appeal to you. Sentiment plays an important part in human affairs. An acute sentiment in matters of religion, used without the corrective of reason, degenerates into fanaticism, with the consequent upheaval of empires and nationalities that have been broken to pieces by the fierce wave of bigotry. Mere impulsive sentiment, however, of this sort cannot last long, and is doomed to perish very fast. Such is the unmistakable lesson you learn from universal history. Your religion makes no appeal to your impulses, but it makes heavy calls on your reason. I trust you will agree with me that if you can enter into the spirit of your religion, if your religious sentiment has reason for its basis, it is bound to outlast the ravages of time and circumstances. I am sure you do not believe, as some members of your community unfortunately do, even in this refined twentieth century, that all the religious duties that you owe to yourselves consist in washing all the naked parts of the body every morning with the *gōmēz*, and repeating certain Avestan texts five times a day. Your religion reminds you every moment of your lives that as rational creatures you must always reason and be always up and doing, and it reminds

you also of your free will with the gift of which is imposed on you the responsibility for all your actions. In this respect it is a religion which is bound to attract universally all classes of man and society. It is your duty, then to exert to find out and to expound to a wider audience the rational spirit of your religion. Follow minutely the rules of criticism which I read to you in the opening and you may rely on it that you will by understanding and acting the religion in life achieve the best results. You will become better citizens and better members of society, and you will also help to formulate the conduct of others accordingly

# LECTURE II

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## EXPOSITION REGARDING KNOWLEDGE AND, INSPIRATION — OR *SRAOSHA*

As previously announced, I propose to address you this evening on the exposition found in your religious books regarding knowledge and inspiration. I have coupled with it the name of *Sraosha* which expression, as I shall attempt to show to you from an analytical and synthetical observation of the different passages in which the name occurs, denotes the idea of "knowledge" or "inspiration". I feel that my task in attempting to prove this is rather an uphill one. For the traditional acceptance of the term, as also the denotation attributed to it by several learned lexicographers, go to show that *Sraosha* is an angel whose particular function is to promote obedience in this world, and to fight a battle against *Aeshma*, the demon of wrath. Other functions are also ascribed to *Sraosha* in the traditional Pahlavi and other later writings, but in the interpretation of the Avestan texts, so far as I am aware of, the meaning invariably ascribed by scholars to the term *Sraosha* is that of "obedience". I shall try to adopt both a negative and a positive method in attempting to justify the meaning which I ascribe to *Sraosha*. I shall show that, by reading the meaning of "obedience" in the various texts in which the name *Sraosha* occurs, you very often cannot arrive at any sensible meaning, and, on the other hand, that by reading the meaning of "knowledge", you are always able to grasp the significance of those passages.

In the first place, I should like to point out what are the necessary functions which *Sraosha* is depicted as performing in the later literature where you find allegorical references made to this Yazad. You are told that *Sraosha* holds a

watch over people by day and by night. Now I fail to understand how obedience can keep a watch over man by day and by night. Supposing however you say that *Sraosha* is "knowledge or inspiration. You can then say that one who has knowledge or who is blest with inspiration is secure by night and by day for he can with the power of knowledge face any difficulties that may come in his way. Take, again the fact that *Sraosha* is the messenger of Ahura Mazda, and that it is through him that Ahura Mazda sends the revelation to the prophet. Obedience cannot bring any revelation to anybody. But inspiration can and if you take *Sraosha* as "inspiration" then you can say that man obtains a revelation from God by means of innate knowledge, or what is more commonly styled as "inspiration". Then, again *Sraosha* is the protector of man especially in sleep. Now where is the occasion for a man to be obedient when he is in sleep? How can there be any protection to him through the instrumentality of obedience when he is in sleep? But supposing you say that this language is to be taken as figurative, and that the idea meant to be conveyed is that *Sraosha* relieves a man when he is quite confounded or is in difficulties. I believe you will admit that it is by means of knowledge or inspiration that real relief could be obtained in difficulties, but not so through obedience. I shall stop here for the moment. I have placed these few remarkable points before you to serve as an introduction to my subject, and I am sure you will now dispassionately consider the arguments which I am going to urge before you in support of my interpretation of the term *Sraosha*.

I shall first examine the etymological significance of the term. I believe all are agreed in holding that the name is derived from the root *srw* 'to hear' and that literally it denotes a "hearing". The term *Sraosha* which thus originally denoted the abstract *idea* of hearing is then extended to

denote the concrete object of hearing, and it then receives a further extension of meaning whereby it is taken to denote the "knowledge" acquired by or the "inspiration" which comes to the hearer. I contend that in so arriving at the significance of the term, I am offending no rules of etymology or philology. I merely suggest that the root meaning of the word which has an abstract denotation is later on given up in favour of a concrete meaning. However, in the extant Avestan writings you do find one passage where the literal sense of "hearing" is attached to the term *Sraosha*, and that is in Yasna, XLV, 5, which runs thus :

" *At fravakhshyā hyat mōi mraot spentōtemō*

" *Vachē srundyāi hyat maretaibyō vahishtem*

" *Yōi mōi ahmāi seraoshem dān chayaschā*

" *Upā-jumen Haurvātā Ameretātā*

" *Vanghēush manyēush shyaothmāish Mazdāo Ahurō* "

The term *Seraoshem* denotes here simply "hearing" in the abstract, and yet you will find it commonly rendered by the word "obedience". The passage means "Then forth shall I proclaim that word which the most bountiful Ahura Mazda told me, which is the best for mortals to hear; to those who give a *hearing* and close attention to my speech, will accrue happiness and immortality through the deeds of the Good Mind." Here Zarathushtra distinctly tells his audience that he is going to communicate something which is worth hearing. He does not ask them to obey him. No. He is only going to tell them what Ahura Mazda declared it desirable that men should hear. There is no reason then to bring in the idea of "obedience". Those who translate the word *Seraoshem* in the context by "obedience" lead to this inference that happiness and immortality come to those who obey Zarathushtra. Now, in the first place, this inference can never legitimately be drawn from any of Zarathushtra's teachings, for he always asks his audience not to obey *him*, but to obey *their reason*. All he asks is a patient hearing,

and he always tells his audience to bring their own reason to bear on what he says and to act accordingly. In the second place the context here distinctly says that happiness and immortality come to people through their deeds of the Good Mind. They do not result from obedience to Zarathushtra. The idea which is meant to be conveyed by the Gathic strophe is that the best and most profitable lesson for mortals to hear and to ponder upon is that through good deeds man obtains immortality.

I was discussing the derivation of the meaning which I ascribed to the term *Sraosha* from its root before I cited to you this passage from the Gathas. You might for a moment see how the idea of obedience is derived from the root meaning. The idea of a mere "hearing" is stretched to denote "listening with humility and obedience" and then the idea of "hearing" is entirely given up in favour of "obedience". Now it is an entirely unusual process of tracing the meaning of a word to its root whereby you come to the conclusion that its original root meaning is entirely lost. But then I should not object to the method, if only the meaning could be justified by its application in the context in all the passages where the term in dispute is found, or if it could be consistent with the idea which the term is intended to convey. I have already pointed out, in the beginning, how the meaning of "obedience" cannot suit the ideas which are expressed about *Sraosha* in some texts.

I shall now take up another line of argument. As you are aware, of the many different Yazads whose names we find in the Avesta, the name of *Sraosha* alone is met with in the Gāthas. This Yazad may therefore, claim some importance in your eyes and it may well be expected to convey some important idea emphasized in the Gathas. Obedience is indeed a virtue, but it is a passive virtue. If however you go over the whole of the Gathas, you will find there a continual man

date in favour of activity and against passivity, and you would, therefore, not expect to find "obedience" given such an importance there. On the other hand, you find the greatest weight attached to "knowledge" in the Gāthās. Everything is to be done and achieved through *Vohū-Manō*, i.e., the Good Mind, and this, in its turn, brings "knowledge". The utility of knowledge is continually emphasized in the Gāthās, and hence you can well understand why *Sraosha* is given an importance there if you know that it stands for "knowledge".

I shall, however, not waste any more time in thus placing before you other stray reasons of this kind, but I shall take up particular passages from the texts, and comment upon them individually with the object of gathering, upon a careful examination of the several passages, the meaning of *Sraosha* such as would suit all the texts. I shall examine the Gāthic texts in the first instance.

You read in Yasna XXVIII, 5, the following —

*"Ashā kat thwā deresāni manaschā vohū vaedemno  
Gātūmchā Ahurāi sevīstāi Seraoshem Mazdāi",*

i.e., "O Asha, when shall I intelligently see thee, and Vohu Mano and Sraosha, the throne for Ahura Mazda, the most beneficent?"

Now, if in this passage you substitute for *Sraosha* the word "obedience", you would come to this that Zarathushtra is extremely anxious to see obedience side by side with *Asha* and *Vohū Manō*, as if it requires any effort or intense longing on the part of a man to acquire and see obedience. But if you substitute the word "knowledge" for *Sraosha*, you see a very noble and beautiful sense in the passage. It is knowledge and inspiration that Zarathushtra continually prays for, in order to promulgate his mission on earth. And here he calls knowledge the pedestal on which Ahura Mazda is enthroned. According to the teaching of Zarathushtra, next to free-will, it is the con-

sciousness of man — his acquirement and use of knowledge — which is held to be of the utmost importance in shaping his destiny, because it is for acts done consciously and wilfully that man is held responsible. And here Zarathushtra seeks knowledge side by side with the gifts of the Good Mind and Righteousness for attaining supremacy in greatness and goodness for knowledge is, according to this statement the seat of Ahura Mazda Himself

In Yasna XXXIII, 5 you have the following—

*Yaste uspe mazishtem Sraoshem abaya avanghano*

*"Apano daregō-yyaitim a kishathrem vangheush ma  
nanghō*

*Ashat ā crezush pathō yaeshu Mazdao Ahurō shaeti*

i. e., I invoke Sraosha Thy greatest of all, for help for the achievement of long life in the realm of the Good Mind and for attaining through purity the path of virtue wherein Ahura Mazda dwells

The sentiment expressed here is somewhat akin to what you find in the passage last cited by me. Here there is mention of the abode where Ahura Mazda dwells, as in the other instance was mentioned the 'throne or seat' of Ahura Mazda. And here the meaning of the passage is abundantly clear. I believe you can very well understand a man depending on his knowledge in order to have a long life in the realm of the Good Mind in order that is, to acquire a name for intellectual culture. But you could not say the same of obedience which is a passive virtue. How could implicit obedience win for you a name for intellectual culture? Here again, the idea of knowledge is far more suited to the context than that of obedience. For if obedience were substituted here for Sraosha the passage would have hardly any rational meaning

I shall next cite Yasna XXXIII, 14 which says :

*"At ratām Zarathushtrō tanvāschit khakhyao ushtanem*

*'Dadaui paurvatatem mananghascha vanghēush Mazdai*



"*Shyaothnahyā ashāi yāzhā uklidhakhyāchā Sraoshem  
khshathremchā*",

i. e., "Zarathushtra dedicates the very vital principle of his body and his pre-eminence over all men in good thought unto Mazda, to Asha he dedicates his knowledge and power of word and deed."

Here I have taken the liberty of substituting immediately "knowledge" for *Sraoshā*. The idea sought to be expressed in the strophe is this that Zarathushtra is ready to devote and sacrifice his life for the cause of Ahura Mazda, and to direct his knowledge for the pursuit of *Asha* or purity, and that he will not abuse his knowledge for questionable ends. As a parallel to this idea, you read in Yasna XXVIII, 9, a declaration by Zarathushtra who, after praying devoutly for the gifts of the Good Mind and Asha and knowledge, solemnly asserts . *Anāish vāo nōit Ahurā Mazdā . yānāish zaranaemā*", i. e., "O Ahura Mazda, we shall not cause pain to Thee by the instrumentality of these gifts" Supposing, however, you were to take *Sraoshā* as "obedience" and to say that Zarathushtra dedicates his obedience to righteousness, you would have an extremely tame sentiment, for obedience to proper authority would, I presume, be included in righteousness.

I shall next consider Yasna XLIII, 12, which runs thus :

"*Hyatchā mōi mraosh ashem jasō frāksluēnē*"

"*At tū mōi nōit asrushtā panyaoghzhā*"

"*Uzereidyāi parā hyat mōi ajumat*"

"*Sraoshō ashī mūzā rayā hachumnō*"

"*Yā vī ashīsh iānōibyō savōi vidāyāt*",

i. e., "As Thou hast told me specially to approach righteousness, do not direct me to do things not listened to, or to go forth, before *Sraoshā* comes up to me with blessings and great wealth, so that to Thy combatants may accrue blessings in profit, (i. e., benefits may accrue by way of reward)".

In order to understand exactly the meaning of this paragraph, you have to take the assistance of what is stated in the

preceding strophe. There you find Zaratushtira saying that the work of spreading conviction and faith in his teaching amongst men is very difficult, although it is the best, and although it is the will of Ahura Mazda that it should be done. He says further that he does not think it proper in order to gain success in his mission to talk things which nobody will listen to. But says he, he would like to wait until *Sraosha* comes up with his best riches. Now if *Sraosha* were here to be interpreted to denote obedience the passage would have no meaning at all whereas, if you take it to denote knowledge or inspiration as I suggest you get very good sense. Ahura Mazda has asked Zarathushtra to propagate his mission on the lines of *Asha*. Zarathushtra says it would be useless to proceed hastily and talk of things to which nobody will pay any heed, because he could not yet make himself sufficiently intelligible. He wants to wait until he gets all the wealth of *Sraosha* or knowledge so that he may then by the Good Mind's endeavour be able to score a victory amidst the contending factions in the debate on religious matters which victory his superior knowledge would bring him.

I should like to point out in this connection the existence of the word *asrushita* in the strophe which I have just now attempted to interpret to you. I only draw your attention to that word which is the negative of *Sraosha*. Here as every translator has it, the word is used as a verb in the literal meaning of "not heard" or "not listened to". I do not suggest that it advances my argument any further. But it can not help those who maintain that *Sraosha* signifies obedience. In fact this word as it is found used in the context can throw no special light on the meaning of *Sraosha*.

I shall pass on to Yasna XLIV 16 which runs as under

"*Tat thwa peresa esash moi vaosha Ahura*

*Rē verethrem ja thwa pōi sēngha yōi hēnti*

*Chithra moi dām ahubish ratum chizhid*

"*At hōi vohu Sraoshō jantu manangha*

*Mazda ahmai yahmai vashi kahmaichit*",

i.e., "Tell me aright, O Ahura Mazda, what I ask Thee. Who is the victorious smiter for the protection of Thy teachings? Make manifest to me a wise lord for both the worlds in order that to Him to whomsoever Thou desirest may come *Sraosha* with the Good Mind."

In this passage also the word "obedience" will not fit in with the context, if it was substituted for *Sraosha*. For then you would have to come to the absurd conclusion that obedience is to come by the special grace of Ahura Mazda to whomsoever Ahura Mazda desires, as if it has not to be present necessarily in all men. But substitute "knowledge" in the translation for *Sraosha*, and you get a very plain meaning of the text. A wise lord is asked to be made known for the worlds so that "knowledge" may come as an accompaniment of the Good Mind to those people whom Ahura Mazda should think deserving of it.

Lastly, you find *Sraosha* in the Gāthās in Yasna XLVI, 17, where you read

"*Hadā vīstā vahmēng Sraoshā rādaṅghō*

"*Yē vīchīnaot dāthemchā adāthemchā*

"*Dangrā mantu ashā Mazdāo Ahurō*",

i.e., "Through *Sraosha* have I always offered adoration with gifts. May Ahura Mazda who discriminates between right and wrong consider that."

Here, indeed, the idea of obedience may suit the context. If you substitute that for *Sraosha* you would say that the idea meant to be conveyed is that adoration is offered to Ahura Mazda through obedience. But it must be noted that even if the idea of knowledge is read in the text for *Sraosha*, you get good sense. The sentence would then mean "May Ahura Mazda who discriminates between right and wrong consider the fact that adoration is made to Him with understanding or knowledge, i.e., with a proper appreciation of the worth of the act." If you were to act on the presumption that the word *Sraosha* is used consistently in one sense in all parts of the

Gathas, you would not hesitate to interpret also this passage by substituting "knowledge" for *Sraosha*

This finishes the Gathic passages where the word *Sraosha* and its forms occur. I shall examine in some detail hereafter the whole of the *Srōsh Yasht* (Yasna LVII) as also the *Srōsh Yasht Hadokht*. But before that I shall examine other texts where you find *Sraosha* referred to. In Yasna I 7 you have the epithets *ashivat verethrajan* and *fradat gaetha* applied to *Sraosha*. *Sraosha* is thus full of *ashis* or blessings and victorious and "promoter of the world". Now I do not wish to contest that obedience may be said to confer blessings on those who practise that virtue, or again that it may be taken to be victorious over some vices, but I cannot understand how obedience which is, as I said before a passive virtue, can promote and further the world. The epithet *fradat gaetha* would therefore not suit the idea of obedience. But all the three epithets can apply very well to knowledge. It would be waste of time to expatiate before you on the benefits resulting from knowledge or on the victoriousness of knowledge for knowledge is power and by that power you are able to overcome successfully any amount of difficulties in the world. And lastly knowledge and advance of knowledge are as you know the prime factors by which progress is achieved in the world. You thus see that all the three epithets are very appropriate if applied to knowledge but that you can not well say the same of obedience.

In Yasna X 16 you have a list of five good things and five evil things, where among others *Sraosha* is reckoned as good and *asrushti* the opposite of *Sraosha* is reckoned as evil. But as there is no further explanation offered of what *Sraosha* and *asrushti* are by means of any epithets or the like you cannot expect the passage to throw any further light on the meaning of the two words. I suggest however that "knowledge" is considered a desirable acquisition and that illiteracy is reprehended.

I shall pass on to consider the next passage where *Sraosha* is mentioned, and that is in Yasna XXVII, 6, which is repeated also in the *Visperad* XII, 2. You there read "*Vanghush Sraoshō yō ashahē hachaitē māzā rayā hēcha idha yōthwa astū*", "i e," "May the good *Sraosha* who is accompanied with the great wealth of purity be here united with this." Here, as in Yasna XLIII, 12, you see the expression *māzā rayā* used in connection with *Sraosha* to point out the great riches of knowledge. Here *Sraosha* is said to be accompanied with the great wealth of righteousness. Now obedience may be represented as possessing the wealth of righteousness, but the idea rather is that knowledge brings in its train the great benefits which arise from the law of righteousness which you acquire through knowledge.

Then you find in Yasna XLVI, 1, 3, a prayer that *Sraosha* may be on the spot for the praise and propitiation respectively of Ahura Mazda and of the waters and the *Fravashis*. Now, I believe, you will not say that it is necessary to have obedience in order to propitiate Ahura Mazda and the Yazads. But if you attend to the spirit of the Avestan teachings which maintain that one good work is equal to numerous prayers and ceremonies, you would come to the conclusion that the desire here expressed is that of seeking knowledge for the performance of righteous actions, which is itself tantamount to a praise and propitiation of Ahura Mazda and the Yazads. And this idea becomes clearer from a passage in the *Visperad* XV, 1-2, where after an enjoinder to prepare oneself for the performance of good deeds "according to law and in a proper manner" (*daityanām rathwyanām*), and for the avoidance of unlawful deeds, and for affording help to the helpless, a prayer is addressed that *Sraosha* may be there,—and for what? For the worship of Ahura Mazda. You see here very tersely described the ideal worship of Ahura Mazda. It consists in doing the right thing at the right time, and attending to the wants of the needy, etc. And in order to do

that, how could you receive any special assistance from obedience? It is the help of "knowledge" that you seek for the attainment of that object, and hence it is knowledge that is desired by the pious invoker who yearns after performing the ideal worship of Ahura Mazda — a worship that consists in practically carrying out the precepts and commandments of Ahura Mazda

In *Yasna* XL, 5 you have a prayer which forms part of the *Afringan-i Dahman* in which the reciter desires that *Sraosha* may in his house dispel *asrušiti*. Now the context induces me to believe that the idea here is to pray that knowledge may dispel darkness. I say so because of the things that are next prayed for namely peace which is to dispel discord, liberality to dispel illiberality etc. Now you know how often peace is disturbed by all sorts of misunderstandings, and it is to remove misunderstandings and to obtain peace that the reciter desires knowledge. Again obedience is a virtue which in the case of a house must be exercised towards some one superior. But here *Sraosha* is sought generally for the house and the best interpretation you can put upon it is that knowledge is desired as a means to bring about peace liberality etc. in the house.

In the *Vendidad Pargard* XVIII you find a beautiful allegory in which *Sraosha* is represented as exchanging questions and answers with the *druja*. The gist of this allegorical conversation is that it is men who of their own wish and will, increase the forces of evil in the world and that it lies in their hands to smite down the forces of evil in the world. It is by men's mistakes that the *druja* becomes pregnant and conceives offspring i.e. the power of the forces of evil in the world increases and likewise it is on account of men's good deeds and preventives against wrong-doing that the *druja* who is pregnant miscarries. This is the substance of the allegorical dialogue stripped partly of its figurative language. Now here it would be extremely hard to

substitute "obedience" for *Sraosha*. How can obedience argue and discuss the question of good and evil — their cause and effect? But what obedience cannot do, knowledge and inspiration can. The author of the *Vendidad* asks men to exercise their faculty of knowledge and to argue and hold a disquisition in their own minds about the cause and effect of evil which is personified as the *drujā*. The allegorical passage which, if taken literally, reads like nonsensical talk, conveys, when properly understood, a noble moral lesson, viz., that it is men who are themselves the architects of their conduct and character, and thus responsible for their acts.

Coming to the Yasht literature you find in the *Hormazd Yasht*, section 9, a teaching which also supports my contention about the meaning of *Sraosha*. You are there told that to the man who, day and night, worships Ahura Mazda will come *Sraosha* along with other things for assistance and for his delectation. Now I contend, how can obedience, which is a passive virtue, at all help a man under such circumstances that he has continually to pray to Ahura Mazda for assistance? But knowledge can undoubtedly render material assistance to any man. And here when you are told that *Sraosha* comes to that man's assistance who praises Ahura Mazda, day and night, you may take it that the idea meant to be expressed is that knowledge or inspiration comes to the man for his assistance.

In the *Ashu Yasht*, section 16, *Sraosha* is styled as a brother of *Ashu*, whose father is Ahura Mazda and whose sister is the Mazdayasnian religion. This figurative language does not assist you quite in getting out the exact meaning of *Sraosha*, but I can only say that it would not be inconsistent with this text to take *Sraosha* as representing knowledge, for you find the Mazdayasnian religion which is the essence of the best knowledge, characterised as the sister of *Sraosha* and *Ashu*.

In the *Mithra Yasht*, section 41, you are told that *Mithra* and *Rashnu* strike fear into the hearts of promise breakers and that at the time *Sraosha* the nourishing Yazad blows like a wind from all directions. If *Sraosha* represents obedience you would have to explain how substantial assistance could be afforded by *Sraosha* to *Mithra* and *Rashnu* in causing the sinners to take fright. But if you take it that *Sraosha* is "knowledge" the sense of the passage would be that *Mithra* and *Rashnu* by the help of *Sraosha* are able to collect all the evidence and knowledge about the guilt of the sinners and that the latter take fright when they come to learn that all the evidence relating to their guilt is made known to those whose duty it is to investigate into and punish crime.

In paragraphs 52 and 100 of the same *Yasht* you also find a similar idea expressed. In the former paragraph you are told that among others the "brave *Sraosha*" assists *Mithra* in meting out condign punishment to those who offend the laws. I only wish to call attention to the epithet "brave" applied to *Sraosha* in this case. You can by no stretch of your imagination characterise obedience as a virtue of boldness. But the idea that knowledge is power and that that power infuses bravery into those who are imbued with knowledge is a very common sentiment even in the Gathas, where the power of knowledge is being continually prayed for as a precious gift from Ahura Mazda. I contend therefore that the adjective *sura* applied to *Sraosha* here as also the adjective *sakhsma* which is another epithet applied to *Sraosha* in other passages, go to support my interpretation of *Sraosha* as "knowledge".

In section 85 of the *Farvardin Yasht* you find a praise of the *Fravashi* of *Sraosha* who is said to be "holy", "brave", "of the body of *Mithra*" and "wielder of a weapon". I have just pointed out how the epithet of "brave" can well be applied to knowledge personified, or to the possessor of knowledge but that it cannot well apply to obedience which



is more akin to humility than to bravery. But as regards the epithet *tanu-mānthra*, i. e., "having the body of *Mānthra*" or "having the *Mānthra* as its body", I say that it can apply to *Sraosha* only if it represents "knowledge" or "inspiration". You can say that the body of knowledge is the *Mānthra* which is the aggregate of knowledge available to men. But I am afraid you could get no meaning by calling the *Mānthra* as the body of obedience. Then, as regards the weapon-wielding, which is attributed to *Sraosha*. You know that knowledge is a mighty weapon which renders abundant help to its possessor. But as I have already said so often in the course of my discourse to-day, obedience works only passively. It can, therefore, not be styled as wielding a weapon which strikes hard on the head of adversaries.

With the exception of the *Srōsh Yasht* proper (*Yasna* LVII) and the *Srōsh Yasht Hādōkht*, I have examined all the important passages in the Avesta where the term *Sraosha* occurs, and I have tried to point out that "knowledge" or "inspiration" can always appropriately be substituted for it, whereas "obedience" oftener than not mars the sense of the whole context. I am afraid my discourse thus far on the many passages which I have dealt with, will have become tiresome to you, and although I could deal with the *Srōsh Yasht* proper and the *Srōsh Yasht Hādōkht* in exactly the same manner, I shall, in order to avoid being monotonous, rather follow a different course in considering the texts of these works. I shall assume now that the meaning of *Sraosha* is settled as "knowledge" or "inspiration", and I shall proceed to show how the idea relating thereto has been expounded in these two Yashts in a style which is full of allegory, and replete in some parts with the richest imagery.

In the *Srōsh Yasht Hādōkht*, after the usual introduction, you come to the subject proper in the third paragraph where you are told that knowledge is the strongest nourisher of the

poor, and you will understand how correct this sentiment is. A poor man if he is endowed with the bliss of knowledge can achieve far better success in life than one who is rich but who has the misfortune of being ignorant and unlearned. Then you are told that knowledge is a victorious smiter of the *druga* or lie. This is but a repetition of the common observation that one who is gifted with knowledge is able very soon to detect falsehood and to destroy it. Then a reference is made to the *Mānthra Spenta*, the holy *Mānthra* which as you have seen above, is but the incarnation as it were of knowledge and here you are told that the *Mānthra* is the annihilator of the wicked invisible *druga*. The suggestion is that by the acquisition of knowledge you are in a position to detect vice in all its aspects, however concealed it may be, and to annihilate it from the world. Reference is then made to particular portions of the holy *Mānthra* e.g. the *Ahuna Vairya* etc. and the power and merits thereof but you are not concerned with them now and I shall pass on.

In paragraphs 4 5 you are told that whoso recalls the *Mānthra Spenta* in the midst of water or in the midst of a sudden apprehension, or in the darkness of the night or whilst crossing a dangerous bridge over a river or in by ways and alleys or in the midst of demons,—in a word whoever recalls the *Mānthra* in any moment of difficulty is sure to come off safe from that difficulty. The demon the oppressor the injurer will find their eyes blindfolded and the robber's legs will cease to move. You will ask what is this charm and spell about the *Mānthra* that such a magic effect can be produced? As you have seen above, the *Mānthra* is the best knowledge, and recalling the *Mānthra* in moments of difficulty is the same as making a proper and discriminate use of your knowledge at the proper time. Surely no magic is referred to in the passage. The author only impresses on you the usefulness of attaining knowledge as an indispensable weapon for the attainment of the noblest ends and for the subjugation of the greatest difficulties.

The sixth paragraph says that by preaching forth, *i. e.*, by promulgating and propagating the *Mānṭhira*, the force of the devils is weakened and the mouths of the evil ones become gagged. The promulgation of the *Mānṭhira* is the promulgation of knowledge, and the result described here of the promulgation of the *Mānṭhira* is the consequence of the spread of knowledge. This is again an observation which needs no comment. The more you spread education and knowledge, the more you increase the powers of good, and gag, as it were, the mouths of all evil-doers who are entirely foiled in their wicked ends, which people find out through the enlightenment which is the result of a good education and training.

Indeed, knowledge does the work of a watch-keeper, as a dog who protects cattle. That is what you read in paragraph 7. Hence it is that the praises of knowledge are sung in thought, word and deed. The worth of knowledge and its greatness are declared not by mere empty words, but by actual use made of it in thought, speech and action.

Paragraph 8 contains the burden of the praise of knowledge, whose wealth and glory, power and victoriousness are specially detailed. I need not expatiate before you on the store of intellectual wealth which you may acquire in the domain of knowledge, and the glory which follows the acquisition of knowledge, as also the material acquisition of wealth which comes to the share of the learned. Nor do I propose to repeat what I said about the power of knowledge and the victory which it invariably achieves in the battle of life.

The conflict which knowledge wages with evil, and its success in the struggle, are next referred to in paragraph 10, and you are told that knowledge is able to put an end to the domains of falsehood which is a curse to the world whose downfall is sought to be brought about by the powers of untruth. Knowledge protects the world and also moves it ever forward in the path of progress.

For says paragraph 11 knowledge never rests but ever without any repose it protects the creatures of Ahura Mazda and especially in darkness, after the setting of the sun it protects the whole of the creation from harm by its uplifted spear. What is the meaning of this uplifted spear and what is the idea underlying this teaching about knowledge protecting the creation with uplifted spear? This weapon is the reasoned and clear sighted use of knowledge. You are aware of the different devices which have come into being with the advance of knowledge whereby the protection of life and property is made as easy by night as by day for the dangers of night are now well guarded against. This result which has become possible by the cultivation and growth of knowledge is foreshadowed in this paragraph.

And knowledge never sleeps and never has any rest, says paragraph 12. From the time men have begun to work in the moral world as free agents knowledge has had no sleep. But day and night it wages a conflict with the *Mazanyā daevas*. I am afraid you would charge me with making entirely commonplace observations if I tell you that the more you acquire knowledge, the better you learn how little your stock of knowledge is and how much larger is the sphere of investigation yet left undiscovered. This, at any rate, is the sentiment expressed in this section which says that knowledge ever grows from more to more.

I am tempted to offer a conjecture as to the meaning of the word *Mazanyā* used here. Ordinarily it is supposed to refer to some clan or tribe at continual enmity with the Iranian nation. But the use of the name for instance in this place, in the midst of entirely general observations pertaining to the whole world leads me to doubt the correctness of the ordinary acceptation of the term. Supposing you take the word as composed of the prefix *ma* not and the root *san* "to know" with the adjectival suffix *ya* you might come to the meaning of unknowing or "illiterate" and if that

were the correct meaning of the word, the idea expressed in the section I am referring to, would be that knowledge is continually at war with illiteracy. I cannot say, however, that my derivation of the word *Māzainya* is certainly and undoubtedly correct. I am conscious of the fact that the word *mā* is used in the sense of the negative only in imperative clauses. But I say that if the idea of negation is implied in the word, it would remain attached to it not only when it is used by itself, but also when it is but one element in a compound word.

If you proceed further in the *Yasht*, you are told in paragraph 13 that knowledge is never afraid of the *daevas*, but that, on the contrary, all have to bow down before knowledge, and, frightened by knowledge, they are driven away into obscurity. To say the same thing in plain words, the man of knowledge has nothing to fear of plagues and the bringers of plagues, for he knows how to remedy the evils. But, on the contrary, the wicked bringers of calamities are afraid of, and are actually bent down under the weight of the knowledge of the learned, who by their wisdom are able to drive the plague into obscurity and nothingness.

You know how false reports and misunderstandings disturb the peace and comfort of mankind. You are told in paragraph 14 that knowledge keeps a strong watch over falsehood to prevent its attack, with a view to the maintenance of peace and comfort. At the same time you are told that knowledge perceives the law of Ahura Mazda, and that Ahura Mazda has given the religion to knowledge. This means that an inspiration on religious matters comes to those who pursue knowledge, whereby they are able to perceive the laws of nature, obedience to which laws constitutes the practice of the religion of Ahura Mazda.

A man of knowledge is always patient and forbearing, and ever opposed to rashness and violence of temper. And you are told in paragraph 15 that knowledge is created by Ahura Mazda to be the adversary of wrath, fierceness and envy.

It is in paragraph 18 however that you come to perhaps the most pregnant expression about the importance and greatness of knowledge. I suppose you are all acquainted with the story that is told about Demosthenes who when he was asked what was the most important faculty which a brilliant orator ought to possess said it was action and asserted that the second best as also the third best requirement for the orator was also action. A somewhat similar statement you find here about knowledge which is said here to be the first the middle and the end. Go where you will, you cannot advance without knowledge. No profession that you may follow no work, however humble it may be but requires some knowledge to be well done. And here you find the canonization of knowledge which is, as it were the means to the achievement of all ends in the world.

Then again in paragraph 19 knowledge is described as of vallant arms, and as a strong protector who kills the *dactvas* and who is ever victorious, and here at nearly the end of this poetic picture of knowledge you find in so many words the praise of the houses where the pious man the lover of good thought and word and deed, resides and where knowledge is cherished and respected.

Such is the picture of knowledge in the *Srōsh Yasht* *Hadokht*. I shall next place before you the sentiments expressed in the greater *Srōsh Yasht* which it may be noted embodies verbatim a few of the sentiments expressed in this *Yasht*.

I have upto now used the words "knowledge and inspiration" as substitutes for *Sraosha* and you may well ask whether there is or there is not any difference between the two expressions. You know that in the Avesta two ways of acquiring knowledge are referred to. There is the knowledge you gain from external sources by hearing the thoughts and opinions of others, and there is the innate knowledge

the result of *your own* mental disquisition and inquiry. If you wish to differentiate between knowledge and inspiration, you would denominate the wisdom which you acquire from the teachings of those with whom you come into contact as "knowledge", whereas the thoughts which suggest themselves to your own mind, when you are in an inquiring and contemplative mood, would more properly be denominated as "inspiration". In the Avesta these two kinds of knowledge are termed, respectively, as *gaoshō-srūta khratu* and *āśna khratu*. The term *Sraosha*, I have said, denotes knowledge or inspiration. If you were to take the literal significance of the term, you would rather say that it refers only to that knowledge which you derive from what you "hear" round about you. But you know how you cannot always point out anything like a practical difference between knowledge proper and inspiration. For there is nothing that you hear to which you do not apply your mind before assimilating it with the fund of knowledge which you already possess, and there is no result of your mental process of reasoning, but is affected by the thoughts and sentiments expressed by others. Practically, then, there is not much of a difference between knowledge and inspiration, and the term *Sraosha* has been applied indiscriminately to both these methods of acquiring wisdom.

In the *Srōsh Yasht* proper you find in the first section a reference made to inspiration, and you are told that it is inspiration which led for the first time to the worship of Ahura Mazda as one God, and to the admiration of the Amshāspends and others, and that it is inspiration which has led to ceremonial observances like, for instance, the use of the *Barsam*. At the same time you are told that inspiration is a gift of Ahura Mazda Himself.

In the second section you meet with several details of the ceremonial observances and implements which have come into being, partly from what you see in other places, and

partly as the result of your own adaptation of what you see elsewhere in the world. Then you are told in section 3 that the five Gathas of Zarathustra written in verse with their divisions into strophes and their disquisitions questions and counter-questions were also originally the product of inspiration.

The fourth section says that knowledge is the fortress and fortification of the poor man and woman that just as a weak man succumbs before the might of a strong arm so do all violence and wrath yield to the powerful blow dealt by the strong weapon wielded by knowledge. Here you see the comparison between material wealth and the wealth of power and you are told that the fortification which the poor build by their wealth of knowledge is stronger and more lasting than that built by a man possessing material riches for the latter's work is easily destroyed by the ingenuity of the man of knowledge.

In the fifth section you are told that knowledge is swift moving, it is capable of being promulgated far and wide that it is brave and mighty and that it is exalted. You are also told that in all struggles knowledge comes off victorious and receives a welcome seat among the Amshaspendas. The idea is of course that by the exercise of knowledge you are able to work your way victoriously through all difficulties, and that knowledge always leads you and guides you on the right track on the path of the cardinal virtues that are reckoned as Amshaspendas.

Then you have in section 6 the personification of knowledge as being among youths the strongest the most determinate the most active, the swiftest and the most enterprising. I suppose you will say particularly of the last epithet that it is most appropriate to knowledge which is at the basis of all those enterprises which can give hopes of being a success. You are also told that from the house, the city and the country where knowledge is cherished and fostered all the most



deadly calamities march off For, indeed, as you know, the knowledge of the causes and development of plagues and diseases is equivalent to half their remedy and preventive.

The seventh section repeats the sentiments expressed in the *Srōshi Yasht Hādōkht*, paras. 10-13

The eighth section tells you that one Haoma Frāshmī cultivated knowledge, with the result that his speech was pure, his words guarded and watchful and spoken at the right time, *i e*, he spoke the right thing at the right time; that he possessed greatness of all kinds, and, above all, perfect wisdom and supremacy in the *Māntra* The idea expressed in the last phrase evidently is that the cultivator of knowledge for its own sake becomes supreme over all others in acquiring the most hidden truths

Section 9 tells you that knowledge has a dwelling which is formed of a thousand pillars, that it is exalted and elevated far above the average level, that the light of the dwelling is self-created, and that its external walls are decorated, as it were, with stars What a beautiful imagery this is! It tells you first that knowledge is like a strong fortress, and then speaks of the exalted position of a man of knowledge who shines in society by the light of his own ability, and who appears to all those among whom he moves, as it were, like a sparkling star You are then told that the *Ahunaṇavar* and the *Yasna Haptanghāiti* and, in fact, all the chapters of the *Yasna* are but the different instruments which are ever ready to serve knowledge, *i e*, all these texts are but one aspect of knowledge, and they are to be utilised for the advancement, furtherance and promulgation of knowledge in the world They are to be used as weapons with which to fight the battle of life

Section 10 says that the kingdom of the Amshāspends, or the best laws and virtues, prevails in all parts of the world on account of the wisdom and teaching of knowledge; that knowledge is, as it were, a monarch of all it surveys, and that

it moves on from one region to another. The reference as you will see, is to the communication of knowledge from one part of the world to another. Then you are told that knowledge is what pleases Ahura Mazda best, and that it is in accordance with all the laws of the Universe. Then comes an apostrophe to knowledge, and an appeal is made to it to drive out death and violence and the onslaught of those who come violently on for the ruin of human happiness. Knowledge is asked to add redoubled vigour and strength to the honest combatant and to his horse so that the enemy may be at once detected and cut down, and his torments put an end to. I do not think this personification requires any comment, referring as it does to what a man of advanced knowledge and ability can do.

The allegory is continued in section 11 where you are told of the white, shining and beautiful horses of knowledge which move along, as it were, by a heavenly mandate. Their hoofs are of lead inlaid with gold. This evidently refers to the lasting impression created on the mind of the man who seeks knowledge and the pleasure which he who cultivates knowledge for its own sake feels for if you pursue knowledge deep enough, you find it as precious as gold and pearls. The horses of knowledge are swifter and abler than any material object, like the wind and the cloud and the ram and no amount of effort and exertion of other forces can overtake the progress of the horses of knowledge. For knowledge moves fast on and seizes what is in the East and what is in the far West. The idea is that knowledge is universal and all comprehensive and that it makes rapid strides every day.

Section 12 says that knowledge abides among the creatures of God, and that by day and by night, over and over again it proceeds on to the region where mortals live the *Khamras* for putting an end to the forces of evil, both visible and invisible.

Therefore, do you praise knowledge as in section 13, "here, there and everywhere", because of its strong arms, its gigantic strength and warriorship, and its destruction of the *daevas* and the forces of evil against which it constantly wages successful battle

Such is the account of *Sraosha* as you find it in various parts of the Avesta. Starting with the etymology of the word, I have attempted to fix the meaning of the term by fitting it in different contexts where the term is used, and I have also briefly placed before you the well-drawn picture of the value and importance of knowledge, as it is depicted in the two Yashts to which I have referred. It may suggest itself to you that the term *asrushti*, which is the negative of *Sraosha*, may throw some light on the subject. I have already pointed out to you while discussing the ideas contained in Yasna X, 16, XLIII, 12, and LX, 5, that *asrushti*, which is deemed commonly to denote "disobedience", yields very good meaning in those texts if rendered by "want of knowledge" or "ignorance", and in one of the passages it is used simply in its literal meaning of "not heard". I shall now examine also the other passages in the Avesta where the word occurs. The word *asrushtē* is found in the *Haptān Yasht*, 12, but the passage is very obscure, and I do not propose to discuss it here. In Yasna XXXIII, 4, you find the word *asrushtīm* which is found translated by scholars as "disobedience"; but I believe the context rather requires the idea of "ignorance". The strophe runs as under

"*Yē thwat Mazdā asrushtīm*

"*Akemchā manō yazāi apā*

"*Khaetēushchā taremantīm verezen*

"*Khyāchā nazdīštām druḡem,*

"*Aryamanaschā nadentō gēushchā*

"*Vāstrāt achīstem mantūm*",

i. e., I abjure "ignorance" and the wicked inclination from Thee, and all arrogance against the Lord, and the *druḡā* that

imposes upon the people, and the insults offered to the master and the negligence of cattle. Knowledge is found continually connected with the Good Mind (*Vohu Manō*) and here the idea expressed by *asrushiim* which is coupled with *akem manō* is very likely the opposite of knowledge. Besides, you find that in the very next paragraph after this which I have already discussed before *Sraosha* is prayed for to render assistance to the invoker, just as here *asrushi* is abjured and discarded. I have already shown how what is asked for in the latter paragraph is knowledge and hence you can well take it that ignorance and illiteracy are abjured.

In *Yasna XLIV 13* you find the word *asrushiōsh* which is also rendered commonly by disobedience. I shall read the passage to you

*Tat thwa peresa cresh mōi vaocia Ahura*

*"Katha drufem nish alinat a nish nashania*

*"Teng a ava yōs asrushiōsh perenaonghō*

*"Nōit ashahya ādivyēnti hachemna*

*"Nōit frasya vangheush chākhnar mananghō*

1 c. How shall we hence drive away the *druja* to those low fellows who are entirely illiterate on whom the light of righteousness never shines and who dislike all queries of the Good Mind? The last clause ought to convince you as to what is here meant. The people who are said to be full of *asrushi* are those who discard all queries of the Good Mind. You may then take it that they are entirely ignorant and that is the significance of the term *asrushi* in this passage.

Another Avestan word from the meaning of which you may get some useful information on the present question is *Sraoshavareza*. This is the name of an officer perhaps holding a priestly rank, whose duty it was to chastise wrong. The word would literally mean "one who affected *Sraosha*." As the business of this official was to punish wrong-doers and to bring them to their senses, you might be led to accept the

statement of some translators that the duty of the officer was to *enforce obedience* to the law. That interpretation appears, at first sight, very plausible. But if you examine the spirit of the Avesta properly, you will come to a different conclusion. You find that punishment in the Avestan ages, especially those you find the Sraoshāvareza enforcing, were not in the nature of corporal chastisement or fines or imprisonment. You know that the *upāzana* was nothing like a cut of the whip, as the Pahlavi translators seem to have imagined. But you find that the wrong-doer was forced to do some useful deed in order to recompense for a wrong. The business of the Sraoshāvareza was, then, to make the wrong-doer acquire the knowledge about useful works. He was thus the man who brought about knowledge in criminals of the wrongfulness of their acts, and of the steps the latter had to take to retrace their wrong. The meaning which I am suggesting for the term receives further support from another method of expressing contrition for wrongs followed in Avestan times, that of making the *paītita* or repentance before the Sraoshāvareza. But what was the nature of this *paītita*? It did not consist merely in expressing contrition in words for past misdeeds, but it required also that a retreat should be made back to the proper path. This path was pointed out by the Sraoshāvareza who thus clearly was a teacher — an imparter of the knowledge of good and evil.

I also wish to call your attention once again to Chapter XVIII of the *Vendīdād*, to which I have already referred. You are there told of a "bird" which is attached to *Sraosha*, which is, as it were, the instrument of *Sraosha*, and that bird is named *parō-darsh*. The literal meaning of this expression would be "foresight", or "an extensive vision", and I am tempted to believe that that is the significance of the word. The means by which *Sraosha*, i. e., knowledge or inspiration, is to be gained is foresight or an extensive vision. The idea

is that you are to cultivate your powers of observation and use your foresight, and you will feel that you are inspired,— you will acquire knowledge and wisdom. You often find in the *Vendidad* a few words inserted in the Avestan dialect which are believed and I think rightly believed to be the commentary of some later writer. Now after the word *parodarsi* in the *Vendidad*, you read ‘Some people call it the cock’— words which I am tempted to believe, are the addition of a commentator who has tried to explain objectively the symbolism relating to what is figuratively styled the ‘bird’ of *Sraosha*. However, you will see that the cock can well be said to be attached to *Sraosha*, for, as is said in this passage of the *Vendidad* every morning it inspires all men with the knowledge of their duties, and tells them to take time by the forelock, or else repentance may come too late to mend matters.

I derive some support for the meaning which I ascribe to *Sraosha* also from the Sanskrit literature. The word *Sruti* in Sanskrit, which is akin to the Avestan *Sraosha* and which is derived from the same root as *Sraosha* denotes in Sanskrit that body of knowledge which is derived from inspiration as opposed to the *Smriti* which denotes the refinements and comments made on the *Sruti* by the Rishis and other learned men of yore. Thus the meaning of *Sruti* in Sanskrit as inspired knowledge supports my interpretation of the equivalent Avestan word *Sraosha* as knowledge or inspiration.

The references to *Sraosha* in Pahlavi literature also support the interpretation which I place upon the term. You read in the *Artā Virāf Namak* that all communications about whatever goes on in the spiritual worlds are imparted to Virāf by *Sraosha* who is said to have held Virāf by the hand and to have led him over the different regions of heaven

and hell. Now if *Sraosha* were taken as the angel of "obedience" in Pahlavi literature, I feel it would be very difficult to understand the part which *Sraosha* plays in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak*. *Artā Virāf* would have only to be obedient and he would understand all the facts and transactions of the spiritual worlds. But take *Sraosha* as typifying "knowledge" or "inspiration", and the whole thing becomes clear. *Sraosha*, as the angel who is, as it were, the incarnation of knowledge, communicates all the information to *Virāf* who has undertaken a dangerous journey for the acquisition of the knowledge pertaining to the unknown regions, and the representation that *Sraosha* acted as his guide and elucidated all points of difficulty for *Virāf*, is quite proper.

A similar statement is found in the *Dinā-ī-Minōē-ī-Khrat* where you find the representation of a pious man crossing the *Chinvat* bridge on the fourth day after death. The pious man is said to derive assistance from *Sraosha* who answers all his queries, and thus gives him the knowledge about what is going on in the world of spirit. And this sentiment is repeated in the *Shāyast-lā-Shāyast* as well as in the *Dātas-tan-ī-Dīnīk*.

Again, you read in the *Zend-ī-Vōhūman Yasht*, Chapter III, that *Sraosha* is sent with *Nairyōsangh* as a messenger to Iran with a note to Dastur Peshotan at the court of King Vishtāsp to propagate the religion far and wide in the world. You know that *Nairyōsangh* denotes "manly utterance", "manly precept" or "manly counsel". The association of *Nairyōsangh* with *Sraosha*, as in the present instance, would be difficult to explain, if the latter represented "obedience". But if you take *Sraosha* to be "knowledge" or "inspiration", you arrive at the proper significance of the passage which says that manly counsel and inspiration came to Dastur Peshotan and advised him to promulgate the religion in the world at large.

I have already called your attention to the passage in the *Mithra Yasht* where *Sraosha* is represented as a confederate of *Mithra* and *Rashnu* in meting out justice to wrong-doers. In the Pahlavi literature you are continually told that on the fourth day after death *Mithra* weighs the good and bad deeds of every man and passes judgment there and then. You find two angels assisting *Mithra* in the work and one of them is *Sraosha*. What help could obedience be expected to give in the court-martial of the spiritual judge? *Sraosha* evidently does not represent obedience in these Pahlavi texts where he is associated with *Mithra* in the trial of men on the judgment day. But it is the function of *Sraosha* to gather by his knowledge all the facts and circumstances relating to each case. Thus this familiar representation of the Pahlavi writers also supports my interpretation of the term.

Perhaps you expect me to offer some reasons why in Pahlavi literature *Sraosha* is deemed to be the protector of the souls of men for three days after death and why special prayers are customarily addressed to *Sraosha* during these three days. You have seen how in the *Srōsh Yasht* the Yazad is painted as enabling men by night and by day to meet any and every difficulty that might arise and particularly the dangers and difficulties of night. This idea which has a figurative significance as I pointed out to you when I was examining the *Yasht* in detail is understood in its literal meaning by the Pahlavi writers who construe the abstract idea of knowledge expressed by *Sraosha* in the Avestan literature as an angel presiding over knowledge. And they stretch the idea of the protection afforded to men by the angel during night and during sleep and extend it to the souls of the dead which are believed to remain in this world for three days after death. That is the reason why special ceremonies are performed in honour of *Sraosha* for three days after the death of a Zoroastrian. And the reason also why usually the *Srōsh*



*Yasht* is recited at night is that *Sraosha* affords protection for the night. As if the help of *Sraosha* was not obtainable every moment! If you read the text carefully, you will find that the help of the Yazad is to be had at all hours and in all moments of difficulty. But, as I have just said, the special emphasis laid on the protection afforded by *Sraosha* during night is first misunderstood and misapplied, and then the idea is carried forward by an effort of the imagination and made applicable to the souls of the dead.

On the last occasion I said that Yazads and Amshāspends in the Avesta are not to be reckoned as personalities or as angels presiding over some particular function as assistants of Ahura Mazda. You will, I believe, grant that whether you take *Sraosha* as "obedience" or as "knowledge", there is no ground for imagining that *Sraosha* is an angel, at least from the description you have of the Yazad in the Avesta. The Pahlavi writers have, to be sure, taken *Sraosha* as an angel. But that is, as I remarked on the last occasion, the result of the habit of those authors to objectivise the teachings of the Avesta. Hence they attribute an individuality and living personality to even mere abstractions.

Knowledge plays an important part in human life, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is being daily recommended to you. It is therefore not only meet and proper, but very desirable to know what ideas your ancestors of the old old times held about knowledge and the cultivation and search of knowledge. You see how they considered knowledge to be the key for the mastery of the universe. You also see that they held very definite ideas about the infinite mass of knowledge which they said is such that the more you acquire it, the more you understand how little your store of wisdom is. Hence their daily prayer to Ahura Mazda was "Give us knowledge, sagacity, quickness of tongue, holiness of soul, a good memory.

and then the understanding that goeth on growing, and that understanding which cometh not from learning "

You see in this prayer the idea that it is not enough to have a smattering of ideas communicated to you by others, but that you should also bring out by your own meditation thoughts which no learning can impart to you. It points out to you in fact, the difference between knowledge and wisdom, and recommends you to be men of wisdom rather than men of knowledge. For as Cowper has said

Knowledge dwells

In heads replete with thoughts of other men,

Wisdom in minds attentive to their own

And again

" Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much

Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

The man of knowledge is too much imbued with vain self conceit, whereas the wise man is always humble. I hope you will strive to have wisdom as your ideal and in a spirit of humility strive to know what you can and yet remain conscious of how little after all you know or can possibly know

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## LECTURE III.

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### EXPOSITION REGARDING LOVE—OR *MITHRA*

I am going to address you to-day on a subject which must be very familiar to you—the subject of love. No system of religion can be considered to be complete if it fails to impress upon its followers some idea as to the sentiment of love—the sentiment which is a part of his nature. And no ethical code or ethical precepts could be complete without a definite pronouncement on this question. The Christian religion is replete with ideas on this head, and it is a very familiar observation that the Ten Commandments of Moses are all based on the one commandment which enjoins you to love your neighbour as yourself, a commandment which teaches you, in other words, to adopt the golden rule of conduct to do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. Thus this one commandment may well be substituted for all the rest. For instance, if you loved your neighbour as yourself, you would not commit theft, you would not bear false testimony, and, similarly, with reference to the other commandments, you would not violate any of them, if only you laid it down as a policy that in your conduct with regard to others, you would behave as you wish those others to behave in their relations to you. The idea of love is, in fact, at the foundation of all laws—human and divine. Like the teachings of religion, which emphasize the equality and fraternity of man, the laws of states are also based on the principle of mutuality, fellow-feeling, and love of man for man.

I believe it is necessary for me, before I proceed any further, to give you some idea as to what I mean by love. I am not going to give you anything like an exact definition of love, nor am I going to give you any moral and philosophical

lessons on love. All I wish to say is that I use the expression in no narrow sense. In using the word I do not refer to any idea of courtship or matrimony or to the mutual kindly sentiment of parent and child or of husband and wife. I refer to that love which each individual owes to all other men — the love which emphasizes the idea of the equality and brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

The study of Comparative Theology has led scholars to trace the sources of various teachings of Christianity and Judaism to the Zoroastrian system of religion which was itself so complete as to lend many points of importance to the religious teachers of other times and places. You may with great confidence then expect to find in that old old system of religion at least a tolerably clear and definite pronouncement on this universally prevailing sentiment of love, especially when you find the idea so strongly emphasized in all other religious systems of the world. I propose to point out to you to-day with references to the Avestan texts that the sentiment of love in its best and noblest aspect was by no means unknown to the ancient Iranians who had assigned it a very exalted place in their ethical code. And as I shall immediately show that idea has been represented by *Mithra* the *Yazad*.

About *Mithra* and about what is known as the Cult of *Mithra* you find more definite historical notes than about any other *Yazad* named and spoken of in the Avestan books. The Achæmenians who seem to have attached little importance to the many *Yazads* and *Amshaspendas* of the old Iranian Scriptures retained at least the ideas about *Mithra* and you find an inscription at Susa, which shows that Artaxerxes II actually inaugurated the worship of *Anahita* and *Mithra* along with that of Ahura Mazda. The inscription runs as follows —

"Says Artaxerxes, the great King the King of Kings, the King of the countries, the King of this earth, the son of King

Darius, Darius was the son of King Artaxerxes, Artaxerxes was the son of Xerxes, Xerxes was the son of King Darius, Darius was the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenian. Darius, my ancestor, built this temple, and afterwards it was repaired by Artaxerxes, my grandfather. By the help of Ahura Mazda I placed Anāhita and Mithra in this temple. May Ahura Mazda, Anāhita and Mithra protect me."

Here you see the apotheosis of *Mithra* and his inclusion as one of the trinity — as a God on a level with Ahura Mazda. There are very strong reasons to believe that the Achæmenian monarchs were by no means staunch Zoroastrians. And this little inscription which records the apotheosis of *Mithra* as a God in the temple of Ahura Mazda, may be taken as an argument in support of the statement I have just made about the religion of these monarchs.

The Cult of *Mithra* had also spread in Assyria where you find the worship of the Goddess Mylitta which, according to Herodotus, was another name for *Mithra*, and you find the cult extending further to Babylon and Chaldea, whence it travelled on to Pontus and Cappadocia, and thence to Greece and Rome. You do not find any monuments which could give you some definite evidence about the way in which the worship of *Mithra* was carried on in Greece. But that *Mithra* was known to Greece is evidenced from the names *Mithridates*, *Mithrobates*, *Mitrane*s and others which are derived from the name. In Rome, however, the cult was regularly established long before the Greeks came into direct contact with that city. So early as in 90 A.D., you find the poet Statius referring to *Mithra* in the *Thebais*, and there are some who believe that the worship of *Mithras* became known to the Romans through the Cilician priests who were captured by Pompey the Great about 70 B.C. The cult of *Mithras* was at first favoured by the lower classes, and it gradually spread upwards in all ranks of society. It gained a footing in Rome under the Emperor Domitian who ruled between 52

and 96 A. D., and was regularly established by the Emperor Trajan in about 100 A. D. and also by Commodus about 190 A. D. Various beautiful sculptures were engraved to represent *Mithra* and several mythological stories about the god became current. Regular ceremonies were also performed in honour of *Mithra*, and these took the form of mystic rites. The mysteries were finally abolished and prohibited in 378 long after the time of the Emperor Constantine who embraced Christianity and introduced that religion as the State Religion of the Empire. I need not here describe to you in any detail the representations of the God *Mithras* in Rome. I shall refer those who are interested in the subject to a concise description of the same in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Vol. XXI pp 530 531 and Vol. XXV p. 787 as also to the many books and pamphlets dealing with the cult of *Mithra*.

This cult travelled from Persia Assyria and Babylon not only to the West but it has been noticed to have prevailed in the Far East so far even as in Japan. I am unable to give you any idea as to the development of the cult in that country except that the mere fact of its having existed there is mentioned in a short treatise of the Rev. Joseph Edkins, B.A. D.D. entitled *The early spread of religious ideas, specially in the Far East*. You read in different pages in this book the part which the Zoroastrian religion and Zoroastrian ideas have taken in the formation of the religions of the East, especially those of China and Japan. Regarding the cult of *Mithra* the author says (p. 25): "After Zoroaster's age, at a time somewhere near seven hundred years before Christ the worship of *Mithras* spread to Japan."

I need not tell you that in India too, the worship of *Mithra* or *Mitra* dates from very very old times. In the *Rig Veda* you continually find *Mitra* and *Varuna* associated together as *Varuna Mitra* a pair of gods to whom special worship was, and is paid. I may well say that the cult of *Mithra* was at one time universally prevailing in all those civilized

nations of antiquity that ever gave a thought to religious ideas. And it is not at all strange that that should be so, for Mithra represents primarily and essentially the universally honoured sentiment of love — the love of men for all members of humanity. The expression may have received, — in fact, it did receive, various adaptations of meaning in course of time, but the universality of the principal idea connoted by the expression must have attracted the attention of all nations, and consequently they appear to have attached to it no little importance in their religious teaching. There never was in Persia anything like the cult of *Mithra* in Avestan time, there was nothing like the mystic rites which were inaugurated at Rome, and there were no mysteries connected with the Yazad, nor were statues and human representations painted of him. All these ideas were exotic and foreign, and were engrafted on the main idea by foreigners who could not comprehend what Gibbon has called “the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship” As Herodotus has said (Bk I, 131) “They, *i. e.*, the ancient Persians, have among them neither statues, temples nor altars, the use of which they censure as impious and a gross violation of reason, probably because, in opposition to the Greeks, they do not believe that the gods partake of our human nature” I would rather say that the Persians did not believe in anything like a hierarchy of personal gods or Yazads at all

It is often said about the cult of *Mithra* that it is anterior in point of time to Zarathushtra, and that it was revived again after the times of the prophet who suppressed the cult in favour of monotheism. I am tempted to call this opinion a mere surmise. There is nothing to show what the nature of the *cult* was in ancient Persia, or whether it at all existed before the time of the prophet. There is nothing to show that the prophet suppressed the cult, or any cult of a like kind, and there is nothing to show that there was anything

like a cult with its mythological associations ever systematised in Persia in regard to *Mithra*. Although very remarkable points of similarity suggest themselves to all students of Iranian and Indian literatures between the descriptions of the Indian gods and the Persian Yazads you find one difference which strikes out prominently. Whereas for the Indian mind all abstract ideas had to be personified before it could grasp them and even the gods were anthropomorphised, you find that the abstraction is retained in the Avesta coloured at times only by some figurative language or some splendid imagery. As Ragozin observes (*"Media"* Story of the Nations Series p 66) "In the sober earnest minded sister race, viz, the Persians the tendency was all the other way—from anthropomorphism to spiritual abstraction. But then recurring to the question as to whether *Mithra* and the adoration of *Mithra* were ante Zoroastrian or not I feel that one cannot pronounce anything but a conjectural opinion on it. For in the Gathas at any rate there is no reference to *Mithra* as a Yazad. But the universal sentiment of love which is co-eval with the foundation of society must have existed both in and before the time of Zarathushtra and the ideas connected with *Mithra* as they are represented for instance in the *Mithra Yasht* must have been predominant in the country for a long time. As I said in my first lecture you are bound to read the whole of the Avestan texts to get a perfect system of religion. Supposing you give up all other texts but the Gathas as unauthoritative you would have to come to the conclusion that there is nothing like Yazads in the Zoroastrian religious system. It would be rather strange and difficult to imagine that all the vast literature on the Yazads was the result of a later conception and that the authors had no better source to go upon than their own imagination for the beautiful pictures they have drawn of the Yazads in the Yashts. Tradition must have helped them a good deal. And you may well expect that the tradi



tion regarding the sentiment of love, which, I take it, is reflected in the Avestan description of *Mithra*, was received from the times of the prophet and possibly from before his time. The reason, however, why the assertion about the cult of *Mithra* being pre-Zoroastrian is maintained, seems to me to be this. You find both the Aryan nations, the Indians and the Iranians giving great weight and importance to *Mithra*, and the fact that at one time the Indo-Iranians formed one compact nation is brought forward to suggest that the cult of *Mithra* dates back from the times when the Aryans in the West were yet undivided. I say that the conclusion which you can draw under such circumstances as these is bound to be a conjectural one. In India *Mitra* is always worshipped with *Varuna* (Gr *Ouranos*) as the sun-god, which *Mithra* of the Avesta is certainly not, as I hope to satisfy you as I go on. You find that in the sculptures at Rome and in the ideas of *Mithra* which prevailed in Assyria and Babylon, *Mithra* is represented as the sun-god. You know also that the Mithraic cult was borrowed in later ages from Persia, or rather that it was an adaptation with certain modifications, of the praise of *Mithra* in the Avestan literature. You thus see that the idea of taking *Mithra* as a sun-god is a later adaptation, and when you find *Mitra* in India worshipped as a sun-god, you may well take it that that worship is a later modification of the respect paid to the personified Yazad *Mithra* in the Avesta. One difficulty, however, would be suggested by those who assert that the Mithraic cult is pre-Zoroastrian, and that is the existence of and a reference to the worship of *Mitra* even in the oldest *Veda*, the *Rig Veda* which is deemed by many scholars to be of the same age as, if not anterior to, the *Gāthās*. Now I do not propose to enter into this very controversial question as to the respective ages of the two literatures. But I say this that a penny worth of fact is worth more than pounds worth of talk and speculation. You can only speculate, of course, on certain grounds, as to the

times in which these two works were compiled or originally written. But here you have one very solid fact — the fact that an idea which is clearly proved to have prevailed in later ages — an idea which is as clearly proved to have been a later adaptation and modification of the Avestan concept — is found exactly in the *Rig Veda* in reference to *Mitra*. It would be therefore very hazardous to come to hasty conclusions on merely speculative grounds by assuming a remote antiquity for the *Vedas* and then speculating about probabilities regarding the antiquity of the Mithraic cult. The subject about the probable date is, indeed, interesting to antiquarians, but after all it is not of any practical importance to you in finding out what really is the concept expressed by the term *Mithra* in the Avesta. I shall therefore immediately pass on to the consideration of that question and I shall examine, in the first place, the etymology of the word

The word *Mithra* is derived as all scholars agree from the root *mit* to meet. I said that the word connotes the idea of love. Now how can that idea be derived from the root meaning of the word? Wherever men meet together in the world, there is a bond of union which proceeds from the sentiment which is natural and inmost in the hearts of all men — the sentiment of love. And hence the term *Mithra* referring to this sentiment which is universally exhibited by men connotes both the idea of union and of love. In fact the term *Mithra* is often used in the literal sense of union also. That, indeed is its primary meaning and love its secondary meaning but a meaning which is directly derived from the root meaning. You will of course, fancy how optimistic the people of those ages must have been how noble and magnanimous a view of human nature they must have held, in order to come to the conclusion that the most deeprooted sentiment at the bottom of society is the sentiment of union the sentiment of fellow feeling the sentiment of love. In fact

the people of the time seemed to have laid down love as a principal of human conduct and a determining factor in human life. For they immediately ascribe to *Mithra* the characteristics of a *law* and a *commandment*. And thus *Mithra* represents that most fundamental law which, as I said in the beginning of my discourse, includes all the commandments in itself,—the law that every man should love his neighbour as himself. But every law implies a *sanction*—a power to enforce obedience to the law, and you find *Mithra* described as possessing that power and that force. *Mithra* is thus not only *love*, it is not only the *law of mutual love*, but it is also *justice* which is as strict as the principles of law which it administers are universal. In the Pahlavi literature, at any rate, the only idea that you find attributed to *Mithra* is that of justice, for you find continually *Mitrō* referred to as a judge watching the deeds of men, weighing them in a very sensitive balance, and passing judgment with great discrimination. There is yet one other sense in which you find the word *Mithra* used in the Avesta, and that is also traceable to the root-meaning of the word. *Mithra* represents the idea of a *contract*. Now you know that a contract is a legal relation brought about by two or more persons affecting certain of their rights by mutual consent. A contract thus requires a meeting, a union of the will or a consensus, as lawyers will call it, of two or more persons, with reference to some one definite object, and the relation brought about by this *meeting* of the will is also termed *Mithra*. Possibly, however, the meaning of *contract* is derived from the idea of *law*. *Mithra* which originally represents the *moral law of mutuality* assumes gradually the meaning of *law in general*. The only civil legal relations of any importance which you can expect to find in older times would be contractual relations between parties entering into bargains, etc. And *Mithra* may thus have come to be used to denote, among other things, this contractual relation. It is needless to say

that just as *Mithra* has the power of legal sanction to enforce the law in general, it also has the power or legal sanction to enforce every particular contractual relation. A breach of contract is thus an offence against *Mithra*. The law enforces contracts in order to carry out the just hope in men that what they are reasonably led to expect shall come to pass in other words, that what a man has agreed to do, shall be done. *Truthfulness* and *fidelity* are thus essential for the performance of the promises which the contracting parties give one another. And *Mithra* also represents the ideas of *truth* and *fidelity* and is represented as the constant and uncompromising opponent of lie, perfidy and treachery which are represented as the *druja* the permanent adversary of *Mithra*. Justice ought to be *powerful* & capable of enforcing its decrees and you find *Mithra* represented as powerful and ever victorious over the *druja*. A judge must be cognisant of all the facts relating to each case tried, and justice must be blind or impartial. And you find *Mithra* represented as all seeing and watchful and all knowing with the 1 000 ears and the 10 000 eyes, and the 1 000 intelligences with which he is graced, and you are told that the darts of *Mithra* are bound to fall without missing their mark on all those who err against the law.

While examining the significance of the word *Mithra* with its various ramifications, I have in passing just foreshadowed the description of *Mithra* as you find it pictured in various passages in the Avesta, and especially in the *Mithr Yasht*. Before examining the admirable picture as it is drawn in the several passages individually I should like first to point out what *Mithra* certainly does not represent, and yet is said commonly to represent. As I said before, *Mithra* is delineated as the sun-god in Vedic literature and that was the idea at the bottom of the Mithraic cult in Rome and in Assyria. And you often find Avestan scholars maintaining that *Mithra* represents the sun or the "light" or the "twilight"

But I fail to see any justification for this opinion in the Avestan texts. You are unable to trace that idea to the root meaning of the word, and you are unable to fit in that idea in by far the greater part of the Avestan delineation of *Mithra*. The idea of "light" is evidently imported into the Avesta from the ideas about *Mithra* prevailing amongst other nations who have depicted *Mithra* as the sun-god, ideas which have partly been adopted also by Pahlavi writers who consider *Mithra* as the *hamkār* or "associate" of the sun, *hware khshaeta* in the Avesta, and regard the name as a symbolism for "light". *Mithra* is represented in the Avesta as "universal, and all-abiding, and eternal", and it is very likely that the sun which shines universally over the world and is ever-present and eternal, may have been understood by the Pahlavi writers to be *Mithra*, in the same way as the different nations of the world who so interpreted the term, long before the time when the Pahlavi writers published their redactions and commentaries of the Avestan texts

I shall now place before you the detailed picture of *Mithra* from the texts. Before I come to the special picture, full of the choicest expressions in the language which you find in the *Mithra Yasht*, I shall examine other portions of the Avesta where *Mithra* is spoken about. In the *Vendidad*, XIX, 27, *et seq*, in answer to a query of Zarathushtra, Ahura Mazdā is represented to say that the souls of the dead are tried on the dawn of the fourth day, "after *Mithra* places himself on the tops of mountains with pure splendour, and the sun rises". Now I am unable to explain clearly what is intended by this statement that *Mithra* comes up on the tops of mountains, but clearly *Mithra* is not the sun, because you here find it expressly stated that *Mithra* comes up and the sun rises. *Mithra* and the sun, therefore, must be two distinct things. Probably *Mithra* denotes here the idea of light, which, you may take it, is certainly an exceptional use of the word in the Avesta

The fourth *Paragard* of the *Vendidad* contains a very detailed account of the law of contracts and the penalties for the breach of contracts, and you also find there an equally detailed account of the punishments inflicted for offences against the body of others ranging from assault and battery to manslaughter and murder. I believe most of you are very familiar with this chapter of the *Vendidad* where you find the law of contracts and the law of crimes thus partially codified. However I should like to make a few observations on this head. You notice that the different kinds of contracts are named, but they are not well defined or described. For instance it must ever remain a matter for conjecture as to whether what is called the man-contract is a contract for the purchase of a slave, or a contract of service or a contract relating to marital relations, e. g. the promise of marriage. Then you notice how the idea of *Mithra* which is here clearly limited to contracts is immediately extended and *Mithra* is supposed to have the power to enforce contracts as well as to inflict penalties for their breach. You also notice how this idea is further extended, and *Mithra* is represented as inflicting punishments also for criminal offences. In passing I should like to note also that this picture leads us to the conclusion that the penalties for civil and criminal delinquencies in the times of the *Vendidad* were of the same character. But I should particularly like to draw your attention to the way in which the chapter begins showing the definite idea about the obligations and duties which were enforced in those times under legal sanction. You are told that, if a man who owed an obligation to another failed to fulfil his obligation to that other he was to be considered as having committed an offence against *Mithra*. This is the keynote of the whole chapter for it defines what is a breach of contract. It gives you the reason why contracts are enforced. Contracts create an obligation on the part of one or other of the contracting parties or on both, and that

obligation must be fulfilled. This view is entirely in keeping with the view of modern writers on Jurisprudence, who hold entirely an identical opinion about contracts. You may well admire the clear-sightedness of the Avestan legislators, who had such definite ideas of contract law in those crude old times, long long before the *Institutes* of Justinian were compiled.

In *Yasna* I, 11, you find an invocation of "Ahura and Mithra, both great, and imperishable and pure", and this idea is repeated on several occasions in the work. The association of "Ahura and Mithra" suggests a comparison with the *Varuna-Mitra* of the *Vedas*. I believe the Avestan idea of *Mithra* as expressed here shows that it is a principle which is exalted and eternal and holy, having something of the divine, as it were, in it. The principle of mutual love is such a noble sentiment—eternal, and founded on piety in the most literal sense of the term.

In the *Beherām Yasht*, sec 47, you are told that *Verethraghna*, i. e., the "smiting victory", smites with sickness and death those who offend against *Mithra*. The idea is that the promise-breaker and the man who offends the prime law of mankind is bound to be distressed and defeated in the world.

In the *Ashu Yasht*, sec 16, *Mithra* is represented as the brother, i. e., the associate of *Ashu* which represents the best acquisitions of wisdom and justice and uprightness. You thus see that the law which *Mithra* represents is associated with the sentiments of wisdom, and justice, and righteousness. And in the same *Yasht*, sec 2, you are told that whoso adores *Ashu*, adores *Mithra*. To adore wisdom and justice and righteousness, then, is to adore *Mithra* or the law. You may take it, then, that *Mithra* is the law, the observance of which is like following the path of wisdom and justice and righteousness.

In the *Zamyād Yasht* sec. 35 you are told that the *kharena* or glory fell off from Jamshid, and was first picked up by *Mithra*. Now what is the idea contained in this sentence? Tradition has it that the fall of Jamshid came from the time he began to consider himself above the level of humanity and that then he lost all his glory. And here you are told that when it first fell off it came to *Mithra*. I said in the beginning of my discourse to day that the love which *Mithra* asserts is the sentiment which proclaims the equality and brotherhood of man on earth. And here you are told that when Jamshid scoffed at the idea of the equality of mankind and claimed divine honours for himself *Mithra* took away his glory: i. e., the law asserted itself and his self-conceit met with the punishment it deserved. In the same passage you are also told that *Mithra* is the most glorious of all *Yazads* and the king of all countries. This refers, as I said before, to the universal predominance of the sentiment of love as a law.

In the *Afrin : Zartūst* sec. 6 you find the benediction of the prophet to King Vishtasp "May you be as sharp as *Mithra*." Sharpness is the characteristic of law and justice. As I pointed out before you continually find it mentioned that the justice of *Mithra* cannot be deceived, possessing as *Mithra* does, 1 000 ears, 10 000 eyes, 1 000 intelligences, etc.

I shall now pass on to the *Mithra Yasht* itself. The introduction itself speaks of the omnipresence of the law which is represented as the lord of wide pastures, and of the infallibility of its justice which is pointed out in its 1 000 ears and 10 000 eyes and it is also painted as renowned thus pointing to its universal acceptance by all men as a guide for their conduct.

The first section says that the law is a creation of Ahura Mazda, and that it has been created in order that it may be honoured and respected by the world, as much as He Himself for it deserves honour. In other words, here you have the en



joinment to love all mankind in the same way as you love God. Then you are warned against breaking your contracts, even those entered into with the wicked, for these have as great a right to the protection of the law and the maintenance of their rights, as the virtuous, for all are equal in the eyes of the law. Whoso fulfils his obligations and does not commit infidelity, finds his path in life easy to tread and acquires other benefits besides. Therefore is *Mithra* praised, because he bestows a peaceful residence, full of joy and contentment to men, i. e., those who follow the law live happy and contented. *Mithra* brings protection, joy, rejoicing, victory, good grace and purity. The majesty and reverence of the law are represented by the epithets strong and awe-inspiring, infallible and undeceivable which are applied to *Mithra*.

Law and justice emphasize the domain of truth, they are nicely set and arranged, they are majestic, they take an account of things far and wide, they deal with those who come under their clutches with a bold hand, and there is perfect impartiality without any winking. Such is the picture you get in the second section. Whosoever conscientiously cultivates the love of *Mithra*, i. e., respects the laws, always thrives in the world, and the supremacy of wisdom is his.

According to the third section, the genuine follower of the law has nothing to fear from tormentors, his foes are overpowered, and his adversaries brought to book, for the law is sure to assert itself.

The fourth section says that *Mithra* is a spiritual Yazad appearing above the tops of the highest mountains even before the sun. This has led many scholars to consider *Mithra* as the twilight which precedes the sun. But, I believe, this very sentence shows that that view is not quite sound. Light is one of the impalpable phenomena of nature, but yet it is a natural phenomenon. Here, however, you are told that *Mithra* is a spiritual Yazad, showing clearly that it represents some non-natural phenomenon. If you read in the section further, you

see better what is intended. You are told that *Mithra* comes over the heights and descends therefrom to where deeds of charity are done such as the sinking of wells, the digging of canals and the building of water tanks. These acts are the result of the love which man owes to man. And *Mithra* which represents this love is ever present there. You are also told that the man who practises charity and gives alms to the needy with a pious and noble motive will find himself ever prosperous and triumphant over difficulties.

The fifth section says that the law is impartially administered for all men in all ranks of society whatever their status may be and justice will be dealt out to the highest in the land as to the lowest. Those who are offenders against the law are ever diffident of gaining success in their evil designs. They get confounded and miss their aim because they are working against the natural law for all sorts of difficulties meet them in their way.

The sixth section says that the man who is law-abiding has no troubles to oppress him but that the breakers of the law are ever affected by terror in their hearts and the sting of conscience so confounds them that, as it were, their feet become clogged their eyes fail to perceive, and their ears cannot listen. Where, however the protection of the law is, there the most complicated schemes of the wicked can do no harm.

The seventh section says that there is a resulting profit for those who are law-abiding. Those who are godless are always following and adopting crooked ways and means, for the stern law of nature cannot allow them any scope for work in a straight manner. They will never receive deliberate assistance or protection at the hands of the law.

The eighth section says that where there is mutual love and fellow-feeling in a family there is peace and happiness but that where love is wanting whole families are ruined. The law is uncompromising and will work uncompromisingly for

all It will be the best for the good and the worst for the evil ones in the consequences of actions. In fact, the law is the lord of peace and discord for all regions. Practise love and true charity, and you win renown not only for yourself, but for your house and your country also. You acquire the kingdom of happiness and strength of mind, you acquire glory and a good name, your soul remains pure and sanctified, the greatness and knowledge of holiness is yours.

The ninth section says that the law requires you to fulfil your obligations, to pay off your debts, and that the true lover desires guests in his house. It also says that the man who fights for the love of his country, is sure to succeed. Horrible are the dwellings of the liars and the perfidious. Horrible is the condition of their property. Their intentions are never carried out. They invariably miss their mark. They may use the lance and the javelin, and the sword and the club with any amount of labour spent in pointing and handling them,—they will fail to hit their mark, for the law will assert itself, and foil their aim. Their conscience is sure to sting, and the fear of justice overtaking them continually belabours their minds, and their hearts are full of terror. They fall down before the majesty of the law, however large their numbers may be, they will fall by the hundreds and the thousands and the tens of thousands and the millions.

In the tenth section you are told that the dominion of the law of love extends as wide as the whole earth, that the sentiment of love is magnanimous, exalted and full of liberality. The universal law is ever present, and in all places, watching in front and from behind, and unerring in its vision.

The eleventh section again repeats the idea mentioned before, that the violator of the law cannot get on well, for his feet and eyes and ears fail to work, as he is quite confounded, and ever in fear of meeting his doom at the hands of justice.

The twelfth section represents *Mithra* as seated on the highest of the high mountains, wishing peace and good will to all men taking a comprehensive survey of the whole world. From that noble and exalted position *Mithra* comes down with all his might to baffle the designs of the evil schemer whom he watches from on high. Here too *Mithra* evidently represents the splendour and majesty of law and justice which are sure to find out the truth.

In the thirteenth section *Mithra* is represented as complaining to Ahura Mazda that although he protects all creatures, and rules over them he is not cherished and respected though if they did so, they would get the best reward for their act. What else is this but an appeal to men to be reasonable in their conduct to love their neighbours and to be useful to them for thereby they gain the best reward and happiness in life?

For *Mithra* is as the next section says, the dispenser of gifts and blessings. He does no harm to the honest and industrious peasant who is protected against the wrong doing of the malicious.

In the fifteenth section the idea of the law is extended to all nature — to the waters and vegetation who obey the law of nature and work on unerringly. You are then told that perfidious rogues and traitors are moral cowards. They have no courage in their hearts, and they lose all their strength of mind.

In the sixteenth section you learn that *Mithra* also dispenses justice according to the good law which is universally predominant. You are also told that to the man who is imbued with the righteous sentiment of love and fellow feeling for others, comes the best bounty and the noblest riches. He is capable of self-defence and the kingly majesty is his. By the noble example he sets to others, he gathers together a band of faithful followers and observers of the Mazdayasnian law.

The seventeenth section paints *Mithra* as wielding the rod

of authority and turning the wheel of fate. The chariot in which he drives follows straight the path of the law of the Māzdayasnian religion, and as he passes along in that chariot with all his might and majesty, he strikes deep-rooted terror into the hearts of the *dāevas* who wish they did not fall into the clutches of the law. But *Mithra* sees with his 10,000 eyes, and learns everything with his omniscience. Nothing, indeed, can elude the working of divine justice which is symbolised by *Mithra*.

The eighteenth section speaks further of the *fascēs* of authority which accompany *Mithra*, somewhat in the same way as you find *Justitia* armed with a sword in classical mythology. There is, in front, the most powerful boar that carries everything before him, that destroys evil root and branch in the world until no vestige of it is left any more.

The nineteenth section says that honesty is the best policy, that honest and fair dealings invariably carry their own reward with them, and hence it is that men cherish and cultivate *Mithra* who represents this law of honest, fair and square dealings, and who, without exception, brings good in his train.

The twentieth section says that where the law of love is respected and cherished, there fairness receives hospitality, *i. e.*, there you can expect honesty and integrity to prevail. The faithful are always protected, and so also the diligent work honestly and loyally.

The twenty-first section repeats the praise of the might and majesty of law and justice with its thousandfold power and vision and hearing and intelligence, which are all unerring in their judgment.

The twenty-second section says that people in authority, and rulers, however small or large their jurisdiction may be — all, without exception, need the aid of the law for the maintenance of their power and influence, and not only the rulers, but also the ruled have the need of the law for their protection and for equality of rights and privileges. Even animals need the

protection of the law. Witness for instance, the cow that is maltreated by the cruel master and who raises an appeal and cries for the protection of the law, asking for some kind master who should lead her to her stalls. And whoever asks for the protection of the law, whoever needs it will get it, for the law divine is unfailing and indefatigable.

*Mithra* is the *Zaotar*, the leader of all religious observances says section 23. The idea meant to be expressed is that law and the observance of the law, which are symbolised in *Mithra* are at the foundation of religion. The doings and sayings which conform to the law are most gratifying to Ahura Mazda and to the Amshaspends who praise them. The law not only directs the conduct of the world's creatures but it has also been armed with the power of enforcing its dictates. The law will assert itself on all occasions and the dishonest will be chastised and corrected.

Section 24 says that *Mithra* predominates over all the broad expanse of the world at both its ends. He wields a club of authority, at the very sight of which all that is evil takes flight. Violence and laziness and all vices are struck with terror for they are afraid of the stroke of justice which is a stern dispenser of punishment to them.

Section 25 says that over all the wide expanse of the universe *Mithra* passes in a triumphant march. There is full knowledge about him on one side "fairness" supports him on the other. And not only are the individuals who violate the law brought to book but even whole nations are ruined when they lose sight of righteousness and when anarchy is allowed to prevail.

Section 26 says that *Mithra* is the ruler and overseer of all living nature to whom he directs the law.

Section 27 says that all the world is under the sway of *Mithra* from India in the East to the plains of Rangoon on the West. The unrighteous man often imagines that his evil projects will not be discovered and that he will triumph over

of authority and turning the wheel of fate. The chariot in which he drives follows straight the path of the law of the Māzdayasnian religion, and as he passes along in that chariot with all his might and majesty, he strikes deep-rooted terror into the hearts of the *dāevas* who wish they did not fall into the clutches of the law. But *Mithra* sees with his 10,000 eyes, and learns everything with his omniscience. Nothing, indeed, can elude the working of divine justice which is symbolised by *Mithra*.

The eighteenth section speaks further of the *fascēs* of authority which accompany *Mithra*, somewhat in the same way as you find *Justitia* armed with a sword in classical mythology. There is, in front, the most powerful boar that carries everything before him, that destroys evil root and branch in the world until no vestige of it is left any more.

The nineteenth section says that honesty is the best policy, that honest and fair dealings invariably carry their own reward with them, and hence it is that men cherish and cultivate *Mithra* who represents this law of honest, fair and square dealings, and who, without exception, brings good in his train.

The twentieth section says that where the law of love is respected and cherished, there fairness receives hospitality, *i. e.*, there you can expect honesty and integrity to prevail. The faithful are always protected, and so also the diligent work honestly and loyally.

The twenty-first section repeats the praise of the might and majesty of law and justice with its thousandfold power and vision and hearing and intelligence, which are all unerring in their judgment.

The twenty-second section says that people in authority, and rulers, however small or large their jurisdiction may be — all, without exception, need the aid of the law for the maintenance of their power and influence, and not only the rulers, but also the ruled have the need of the law for their protection and for equality of rights and privileges. Even animals need the

protection of the law. Witness for instance, the cow that is maltreated by the cruel master, and who raises an appeal and cries for the protection of the law asking for some kind master who should lead her to her stalls. And whoever asks for the protection of the law, whoever needs it will get it for the law divine is unfailing and indefatigable.

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*Mithra*. But he is grossly mistaken. For, even if he were to think and speak and do evil with a strength, one hundred times that of an ordinary man, he cannot surpass the good thought and word and deed of *Mithra*. He cannot surpass the dexterity and intelligence of *Mithra* with his gigantic power of vision and with his indescribable power of hearing and intelligence. Those who violate the natural laws are consigned to illness and death, their strength fails within them, and the punishment and repentance for their sins comes too soon to be avoided, at the hands of *Mithra* whose commands are no sooner uttered than they are carried out.

Section 28 says that *Mithra* wears a mighty helmet and a coat-of-mail and is armed with a fierce dagger. The ways of law and justice are manifest to all. The mere ringing of the chains of his armoury, the mere flashing of the dagger, the mere tramp of the hoofs of *Mithra*'s horses, are enough to overpower evil.

Then you have in Section 29 a beautiful representation of the degree of mutual love in friends, co-workers, joint officiators of ceremonies, co-pupils, master and pupil, parents-in-law and children-in-law, brethren, father and son, fellow-countrymen and co-religionists. It is curious to note that the bond of love is said to be greatest in co-religionists, and next to that in fellow-countrymen. The religious and reverential love of God and the love of the country or patriotism thus come out prominently as the most cherished sentiments of the time.

Section 30 says that love is the moving force in all men, that love uplifts their drooping spirits. Then you are told of the way in which *Mithra* or "love" or the "law" is to be cultivated. And, as in all parts of the Avesta, you here find the enjoinder first to wash the body and to get rid of all material impurity in order to be prepared for the practice of the best intellectual and moral virtues.

Section 31 says that the law is immortal and imperishable,

and gives you again a beautiful picture of the might and majesty and sublimity of the law with its mighty pomp and paraphernalia — the fine horses, and the bear that carries all before him the arrow and the mace the lance and the javelin the sword and the club with all which *Mithra* rides a triumphant march through all the seven regions of the earth bringing happiness and comfort to the loyal and law abiding and striking terror into the hearts of the evil oppressors and tormentors, as he passes along on his victorious course

Section 32 says that prosperity ever comes to the man who has fellow feeling and love in his heart for others. Practise acts of kindness and love, with pure and untainted motives and you are sure to do good and to succeed in your noble effort. But cloak your hideous intentions in the garb of piety and charity you will curse your own self for having tried the act. If you practise charity only to show off your greatness and pride and egotism you will not long thrive you will not acquire true reputation and glory

Section 33 says that *Mithra* has no equal in his distinction in his might and exalted greatness. His victory is coupled with majesty he is the mightiest of the mighty the most intelligent of the intelligent all knowing and unerring

Section 34 says that the light of the law shines like *Tishtrya*, the brilliant luminary and the course which law and justice take, is guided by Ahura Mazda himself

In the last section you have the beautiful summing up where the omnipresence and universality of the law are emphasized. For love and the principle of love are *over* the regions and *in* the regions, *towards* the regions and *above* the regions *underneath* the regions, *before* the regions and *behind* the regions. "Praise be to love and praise be to the Author and Bestower of this kind and noble sentiment, praise to the Lord Mazda Himself!

Such is the picture, as you find it in the *Mithr Yasht*, paint

ed in the most glowing colours, and sparkling with the most gorgeous imagery, of this divine gift in man,— the sentiment of love and fellow-feeling, the law of mutuality, the eternal rule of right over might, the strict justice of the universe. Not all our vaunted civilization can improve upon the idea, so chaste in its conception, so logical in its development, so touching and attractive in the psychological accuracy of its conclusions.

Perhaps you would now like me to present to you the idea of *Mithra* in the Pahlavi literature. I do not think you expect to see the picture improved in any way. In my first lecture to you I pointed out that the Pahlavi writers do not appeal so much to your reason and your intuitive sense of good and evil, as to your sentiment. Instead of asking the people to follow the path of virtue, because virtue brings with it its own reward, and to shun vice, because of its own hideousness, the Pahlavi writers lead men to adopt a path of virtue by drawing glowing pictures of the happiness of a material heaven, and they equally exhort men to discard vice by drawing the ghastly picture of the grim horrors of a material hell. Witness, for instance, what you read in the *Artā Virāf Nāmak*. Certain deeds are good, not *per se*, but because the souls of those who practised such deeds went to heaven, and certain deeds are evil, because the souls of those who practised the like of those deeds, went to hell. That is the only logic of the teaching of the *Artā Virāf Nāmak*. It is the mandate of Ahura Mazda that men should walk on one path — the path of *Asha* — for all others are no paths. The Pahlavi writers thus worked upon the feelings of men by appealing to their sense of awe and fear, instead of exciting in them a sense of love for virtue as good in itself, and a horror for vice as hideous in itself. They only painted the consequences resulting from the adoption of either course of conduct, and made their readers continually fear the consequences.

Consistently with this their characteristic, the Pahlavi writers paint *Mithra*. The sentiments of union and fellow feeling the bond of love which ties men and men the universal law of mutuality the prime precept and commandment of God which bids every individual love his neighbour as himself the essence of all morality and ethics the prime motive and *causa causans* of human activity and division of labour — all these do not move the Pahlavi writers. These sentiments find no place in their system of philosophy. To them *Mithra* is not the embodiment of love, not the law of mutuality prevailing in the material world throughout the length and breadth of the land. No. To them *Mithra* is an angel working in the other world a stern judge who with the assistance of *Srōsh* and *Rashnu* mechanically weighs, after death the good and evil deeds done by men in this life in a very sensitive balance which he holds in his hand and solemnly pronounces the stern decrees of fate. The Avestic *Mithra* is full of life and vigour excites in you a warmth of enthusiasm draws you to itself like a magnet. But the *Mithra* of the Pahlavi literature is a cold stern lifeless being who strikes terror in your hearts whom you dare not approach without proper guidance and when you do approach him you do so because you must. There is a sentiment about the Avestic *Mithra* and there is a sentiment also about the Pahlavi *Mithra*. But whereas the sentiment in the Avestic representation of *Mithra* is that of love, the sentiment underlying *Mithra* as he is depicted in the Pahlavi writings is that of awe and fear. The remarkable dissimilarity in the philosophical ideas of the Avestan and Pahlavi writers on a subject of this character ought to be taken into consideration by every student in judging the comparative value and importance of the Avesta and Pahlavi literatures.

Before I close I should like to make a few observations which suggest themselves to me by the way in connection

with the subject with which I am dealing to-day. I believe you will agree with me when I say that the list of the different names of the Zoroastrian months and days was prepared at some time much later than the Gāthic age. But, at any rate, the list was existing in Pahlavī times. The reason why I say so is this. The names of days and months are often met with in that literature. That this list existed even before the Pahlavī writers composed their works is extremely probable. Now, very likely, there was some scheme present in the mind of the unknown celebrity who assigned the order in which the months and days were arranged in the calendar, and if there really was such a scheme, I believe some attention must have been paid to the significance of *Mithra* in assigning to it its place in the list. It seems to me that the primary significance of *Mithra* was considered when *Mithra* was placed as the sixteenth day in the month. *Mithra* signifies "union", and how could that idea of union have been brought out better than by placing *Mithra* exactly in the middle of the list of days leading the second half of the month, and thus uniting the second half of the month with the first? But the scheme is followed not only in naming the thirty days of the month, but also in naming the twelve months of the year. *Mithra* is the seventh month, and leads the second half of the year, just as it leads the second half of the month. I do not forget that, according to the contentions of Mr K. R. Cama and of some of those scholars who agree with him, *Mithra* would not be the seventh month. I have no intention of expressing any opinion on that burning and extremely controversial question as to which is the first month in the true Parsī Calendar. But I believe the position of the month *Mithra* where it is found, would be an argument against the contentions of that school. For even if you look at the question from another standpoint, and, supposing you take it that the names of months are taken with reference to the seasons, I believe the most fitting place to assign to the month *Mithra* would be as the seventh month

in the calendar. You know that the *Mithragan Jashn* is reported in your annals as one to which the greatest importance was attached. It was in fact *the Jashn of Jashns* celebrated in Persia. Now if *Mithr* was the seventh month in the calendar with the year beginning in spring the time in which the *Jashn* would fall would be in the second week of October a little after harvest. It would be about the same time as the *Diwali*. The occasion of the *Jashn* would afford a very attractive opportunity for striking fresh bargains and entering into contracts for commodities for the opening season after the harvest in the same way about as the bargains which are struck on the *Diwali* day. I do not suggest that the ancient Iranians were dealing in important contracts for forward delivery or that they speculated in 'futures' but still there must have been new bargains struck for the opening season after the harvest and some regular contracts must have been entered into. You commonly read in history that in ancient times it was a practice in almost all parts of the world to hold large fairs on festive occasions at which fairs very important bargains were struck. Very likely fairs were held in various parts of the country in Persia in connection with the *Mithragan* festival and these were perhaps made the medium of striking important bargains and of entering into contracts. You know that *Mithra* also represents contracts and it would not be a strange or absurd thing for me to suggest that probably the seventh month which according to the proper calculation of the solar year, would fall in September-October was named *Mithr* from the fact that it was the time for striking fresh bargains for the harvest season and for entering into new contracts for the purchase and sale of goods etc. I am unable to give anything like positive proofs in support of the suggestion I have made about the probable reason why the seventh month would quite properly deserve to be named after *Mithra* which among others represents contracts. It is one of those subjects on which in the absence of proper and

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sufficient historical materials, all you can do is to speculate, and I am only offering the result of my speculation on this question for what it is worth •

## LECTURE IV

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### A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE *Datastan : Dinik*

I have selected the *Datastan : Dinik* in preference to other Pahlavi works for critical consideration because it is the one work of some importance about which and about whose author you are able to obtain the best and quite authoritative information. The age in which the author of the work lived his position and status in society his sources of information the actual place in which he lived are all very definitely known and you are thus in a better position to judge of the merits or demerits of the work. It is a commonplace of literary criticism to try to know as much as possible of the life and surroundings of an author in order better to comprehend the spirit of his works and to form a critical estimate thereon. I shall follow that method of inquiry and shall first give a short account of the author of the text I propose to examine to day.

The introductory chapter of the *Datastan* tells you that its author is one Manuschihar son of Yudan yim or Goshn jam as some Dasturs used to read the name. You also read towards the end of the work that he was a *Rad* of Pars and Kirman and *Farmadar* of priests. Very likely the title of *rad* is the same as that denoted by the Avestan word *ratu* the name given to the spiritual head of a community as opposed to the *ahm* or temporal lord. And the word *farmadar* literally commander leads me to suppose that the holder of the rank was a director general of priests in a province perhaps in a whole country somewhat like what the Father Superior of a province is among Roman Catholics. You will see later on that Manuschihar actually possessed powers even to remove a Dastur from office if he saw



justifying reasons for the same. In what are known as the *Epistles* of Mānuschihar you find the author designated by other titles as well. He is an *Aerpat* and also *Aerpat-khūdāi*, or priestly lordship. He is also known as *Pēshupāi*, i. e., as it were, the "pillar of the faith". You also learn that his father who is twice referred to in the first of his *Epistles* as the "greatly learned leader of those of the good religion, the saintly Yudān-yīm", was a Dastur before him. In one place the father is called the son of Shāpūhr.

The age in which Mānuschihar lived is made clear from the end of his third *Epistle* where you get this colophon: "And this letter is written by me, in my own handwriting, for the sake of the members of the good religion of the country of Iran becoming aware of the opinion, interpretation and appreciation of the teachings of the religion, of me, Mānuschihar, son of Yudān-yīm, several copies of it have been completed in the month of the victorious Khordād, in the year 250 of Yazdagird." From this you learn that the third *Epistle* was prepared in 250, *anno* Yazdezardi, i. e., 881 A. D. You get a date at the end of the first *Epistle* also, where you read that the letter is written on the day and the month of Spēndārmad, but there the year is not mentioned, so that one cannot say with certainty what the date of that writing was. Dr. West maintains, and very likely he is correct, that the first *Epistle* must have been prepared on the day and month named, of the previous year, i. e., 249 A. Y.

From the *Epistles* you also learn that Zādspāram was the younger brother of Mānuschihar, for the former is also called "Son of Yudān-yīm" in the heading of the first *Epistle*, and in the second *Epistle*, which is addressed by Mānuschihar to Zādspāram, he distinctly alludes to the relationship between them as brothers. The heading of the second *Epistle* is very clear, because it states that it is a letter prepared by Aerpat Mānuschihar for his brother Aerpat Zādspāram. Even if

you suppose that the heading of the letter is a later addition you would have no reason to challenge the fact of the relation between the two correspondents. That Zadsparam is the younger brother also appears from Chapter VI 1 of the second Epistle, where you are told that Zadsparam considered his brother to be higher even than a father master leader ruler and high priest and the authority with which Manuschihr speaks in the *Epistles* his advisory and hortative tone all point him out as the elder of the two.

That the author appeared to have commanded the greatest respect and that he was perhaps the greatest living authority on religious matters in those times, appears from the fact that all difficulties on religious matters are submitted to him for solution and from the fact that complaints on the religious ordinances, etc., are also addressed to him. The solution of the difficult questions of religion are contained in the *Datastan* and the settlement of a dispute which seems to have arisen between Zadsparam and his flock is contained in the three *Epistles* to which I have referred. The *Datastan* is more a didactic work in which instructions on various questions is given with reference to the individual questions propounded. They are nice questions, interesting to more inquisitive minds, but which do not seem to have created any stir for the moment for you find that the reply is given months after the questions are propounded. You read in the introductory chapter that the letter embodying the questions distinctly stated that Manuschihr should take his own time to answer the questions at his leisure which the latter seems to have done for he does not commence to dictate his long reply until after twelve months from the receipt of the letter. You may therefore come to the conclusion that they did not form the subject of a burning controversy at the moment, requiring immediate solution. But in the case of the subject dealt with in the *Epistles* it is just the other way. There a complaint is addressed to Manuschihr by the people of Sirkan against

a certain ordinance of their priest Zādsparam relating to certain ceremonial purifications, and Mānuschihar writes an answer immediately. He prepares three letters. One is addressed to the complainants in which he gives them his own opinions on the subject, with the reasons for the same, citing authorities wherever necessary. He addresses a second letter to his brother Zādsparam in which he argues out the whole question again, and lastly he prepares an "open letter" in the form of a decree in which is published a counter-ordinance to what was issued by his brother. The discussion of the subject appears to have induced a good deal of warmth in the people of the time, and therefore you can expect to find the feelings and sentiments of the author, his likes and dislikes, and his philosophical temperament better exhibited than in the *Dāstān* where there is no personal interest or personal question involved.

I shall therefore invite your attention shortly to the way in which the controversial question is treated by Mānuschihar in the *Epistles*. It appears that Zādsparam had issued an ordinance by which the *Bareshtum* ceremony of purification after contact with the dead, was practically to be superseded and only a fifteenfold washing was to be substituted instead. As may be expected, there is a clamour amongst the old orthodox people of the locality, and they immediately complained about this proposed innovation attempted by Zādsparam to the elder brother who is the *peshupāi* or supreme high-priest of the Faith. I do not propose to go into any detail over the whole of that controversial question which is treated in the *Epistles*, but I shall only point out the line of argument adopted by Mānuschihar in order to get an idea about his sentiments. He appears clearly to have been imbued with orthodox ideas, and he is a conservative in spirit. For he says clearly that what has been laid down by more than one authority ought not to be disturbed, unless it is clearly against

the teaching of the Avesta. In support of his contention that the *Bareshtnum* ceremony with the use of the cow's urine should be retained and continued, he quotes a passage from the Avesta which says that the sun, moon and stars look discontentedly on the man defiled by the dead, and that the purifier of such a defiled person pleases and gratifies them as also the fire, water, vegetation, the animal kingdom, the holy man and woman. He also discusses the statements of commentators, especially Mediokmah Afrag and Soshunç and he says that that commentary which specially deals with the subject in question ought to be followed unless there are any special reasons for acting otherwise and he condemns the method which he says his brother has adopted of discussing the different statements of commentators from passages taken here and there, and of placing his own interpretation thereon. He expresses his strong disapproval against his brother for his having alluded to only one side of the opinions of the commentators. He also says that where the authorities clash with one another the older authority is more worthy of respect and credit and ought generally to be followed. He says that you cannot expect unanimity and exact accordance in all writers and commentators. He also says that old customs must be strictly adhered to. In one passage he specially tells his brother that it was improper on his part to have quoted the Avesta in the ordinance he issued, almost in the same way as we say the Devil quotes Scripture. For he says it is not proper to argue on fanciful analogies from Avestan writings and to say that a particular passage which has nothing to do with the subject at issue, throws light on the subject by an analogical way of reasoning. Manuschihar says that he himself follows the teachings contained in the *Din* by which I believe, he means the original Avestan texts and the sentiments of the Dasturs and the *Pouryôtkas*.

In my first lecture I dealt at some length on the rules of interpretation of the Avesta, and for drawing inferences from

Avestan teachings. Here I have given you in a nutshell the ideas of a learned Dastur, who lived over 1,000 years ago, as to the way in which the old books are to be utilised. One of these points I should like specially to bring to your notice, and that is the rather strong language of the Dastur about reading preconceived notions in the Avesta, and arguing on entirely fanciful analogies.

I do not wish to pronounce any opinion on the question at issue itself. The arguments of Mānuschihar may be read with great interest. But the question, you may take it, is very simple. You know that the *Vendidad* enjoins purification after contact with the dead by means of the *Bareshnum* ceremony. Zādsparam wants to introduce an innovation on that rule, and ordains that a fifteenfold washing is quite enough, and a proper substitute for the long-winded *Bareshnum* ceremony, lasting over nine nights. You find Mānuschihar examining the question not from the standpoint of one who looks at the physical cause and effect of the ceremony, not from the efficacy of the ceremonial as judged from any medical or hygienic standpoint. He examines the question purely from the standpoint of the ancient teachings, and arguing that an old time-honoured custom must be strictly adhered to, he decides in favour of the *Bareshnum*, for that is the ceremony laid down in the *Vendidad*, and because that is what has been unanimously recommended and followed by all the learned commentators on the Avesta, notably Medyokmāh, Afrag and Soshānç. The staunch conservatism of the writer here becomes prominent. But I must say that the whole subject has been very fairly argued out by him. One thing more he might have done, and that is to give also some special reasons of his own why a mere wash several times was not enough. But with a characteristic humility he lays it down that what is distinctly mentioned in the *Din*, and repeated by all Dasturs and *Pouryōtkaeshas* must be followed, unless there are any special reasons to the contrary. Perhaps

in this case he sees no special reasons to the contrary and therefore, he does not give any. Very likely he did not wish to make the controversy an occasion for dogmatising himself. He speaks in very plain terms, he actually threatens to remove his brother from his office of Dastur but he does it all without intruding into the controversial question any original reasons of his own. On this point the policy adopted in the *Dastastan* may well be compared. In that book the author gives entirely his own views and original ideas without continually referring to authorities, and only occasionally he cites authorities which are in his favour in order to strengthen his position. Probably as a responsible Dastur he thought it wise not to press what might have been called his *personal* views by giving the result of his own original thoughts on the controversial topic.

The respect with which the head Dastur seems to have been treated is very noticeable. All difficulties are referred to him and his solution is apparently accepted without question. And what you notice besides is the power which ostensibly the head pontiff possessed of removing the inferior grades of priests from their office in case they failed to carry out his decrees and ordinances. This shows that there was in Iran a regular hierarchy of priests who rose to higher offices by gradations and that there was one head pontiff — the *pēshūpar* or *farniadar* — who was to regulate their conduct, and who had the power if an occasion arose to remove the subordinate officials from their post.

So much about the personal history and position of the author. You see clearly his high rank in the priesthood and his independence of spirit, the strict impartiality with which he deals even with his own brother and, above all, his conservative spirit. You also see the method he adopts in pursuing his studies on religious subjects and the principles of judicial investigation he follows. As you have seen he says that he

derives instructions from the *Dīn*, the Dasturs and the *Pouryōtkaeshas*. That is what he says also in the *Dāṭastān-i-Dīnik*, where he says that these same were his sources of knowledge for what he has written in that work. You read in the introductory chapter, section 23, that he has two sources "One is from the treatises which are an exposition of the rules and wisdom of the leader of the religion, and one which is expressed with greater elucidation — the writings of various glorified ancients, those who were the great leaders — the *Pouryōtkaeshas*." As the ordinary acceptation of this term *Pouryōtkaesha* seems to me to be inaccurate, I shall try to settle what it means, for then it will enable you to test one of the avowed sources of knowledge of the author of the *Dāṭastān*.

Ordinarily, the designation of *Pouryōtkaesha* is taken to denote "those of the primitive faith", as Dr West puts it, i. e., those people who were the contemporaries of the prophet Zarathushtra, and who belonged to the religion which existed before Zarathushtra, and the name is supposed to apply by an extension of meaning also to Zarathushtra himself and to some of his contemporaries who are taken to be of the "primitive faith", because they were *born* in that older religion. This meaning is derived by taking the word *pourya* to denote "first" in point of time. But there are many texts in which the compound word *Pouryōtkaesha* is used, in which you cannot fit in this meaning. *Pourya* does not mean "first" merely in reference to any point of time, but it means also "first" or "foremost" in rank, degree or importance, and I suggest that the meaning of *Pouryōtkaesha* is "the foremost man" or "the leader" of religion. If the *Pouryōtkaeshas* were those who were believers of an older faith, they would not be specially remembered, as they are in the *Farvardin Yasht*, for their religion was actually supplanted by Zarathushtra, in favour of his own teachings, and even if you, by an extension of meaning, say that the persons remembered in the *Farvardin*

*Yasht* under the designation of *Poiryotkaeshias* are those merely born in the older faith, but who had, later on adopted the new faith taught by the prophet. I contend that it would be rather unusual to expect that they would be specially designated by an appellation that is clearly misleading as to the religion which they followed. But what is really striking is that in the *Farvardin Yasht* the *Fravashis* of the *Poiryotkaeshias* are invoked quite comprehensively — of those that have been of those that are and of those that will be. Now how is it possible for you to expect the invocation of the *Fravashis* of those who even much later than the times of the prophet continue to adhere to and profess the older forms of worship and faith which the prophet actually supplanted? Clearly this invocation cannot be explained or justified if the term *Poiryotkaesia* denoted one belonging to the primitive faith. Again the fact of *Poiryotkaeshan* being mentioned as one of the authorities in the *Datastan* is also inexplicable. The *Poiryotkaeshan* are included in the second class of sources named by the author viz the commentators who have elucidated the Avestan texts. You cannot expect that people who came long after the time of the prophet and who still adhered to the principles of faith prevailing before his time should have written commentaries on the Avestan texts. However the passage of the *Datastan* itself offers us a solution of the difficulty for it places the term *Poiryotkaeshan* in apposition to the phrase leaders of religion which I say is the real meaning of the word and which would well account for the invocation of the *Poiryotkaeshan* in the *Farvardin Yasht*. For there would be nothing wrong in praising and invoking the *Fravashis* of the leaders of the religion those that have been in the past those present and those to come in the future. I have also one more argument to urge in support of my view and that is in reference to the grammatical formation of the word. If the term were to denote one belonging to the primitive faith it would be



written like an adjective with "the adjectival suffix *ya* as *Pōryōtkaeshya*, and not like a noun ending in *a* as *Pōryōtkaesha* I suggest, then, that the source referred to by Mānuschīr as his authority in preparing his work, is the writings of the leaders of the religion who prepared commentaries for the better elucidation of the Avestan texts

After these few notes on the personal history and characteristics of the author and his sources of knowledge, I shall now offer a few remarks on the *Dātastān-i-Dīnīk* itself. First, as regards the title of the work which is very suggestive in itself. The word *Dātastān* conveys the idea of 'standing orders' or principles that are laid down as rules of conduct from a distant time onwards. And *Dātastān i-Dīnīk* would signify the standing orders or the traditional observances pertaining to religion. Thus the very title of the work gives you an idea as to what it contains. It deals with the traditional opinions of the ancient authorities on religious matters, which opinions were entitled to some weight and consideration. Strictly speaking, then, the work may be styled as a *Ravāyet*, containing, as it does, an exposition of the religious ideas, usages and customs prevailing at the time. As I observed just a moment ago, the author of the work does not claim any originality for the views which he has expressed in his work, although the method of exposition is quite his own, but he depends for his ideas on the teachings, amongst others, of the Dasturs and the leaders of the religion. The work may, therefore, be styled as a treatise on various matters pertaining to religion, expounded according to the ideas handed down from Dasturs and other leaders of the religion. This is just the characteristic of writings which are known as *Ravāyets*. But there is also another characteristic in this work, which is commonly noticed in *Ravāyets*. As a rule, works of that class are written and compiled in answer to queries from people who apply for information and know-

ledge to those who are expected to possess it. And you find that the *Datastan* contains an explanation of various questions propounded by one Meher Khurshid son of Ādar Mah and others, on various matters. It appears from the introductory chapter in the work that these questions were not set categorically to the Dastur but that it was the latter who thought it advisable to divide what he calls the compact writing of his inquiries into chapters in order to answer the questions better.

Whilst I am on the class of works to which the *Datastan* belongs I should like to point out the three classes into which all Pahlavi writings are divided. There is firstly the class of writings which deal with religious subjects and comprise the translations of Avestan texts with commentaries. Then there is a class of works also pertaining to religious subjects but which have no definite connection with Avestan literature. And lastly there is the class of works which deal entirely with secular matters. The *Datastān* i *Dīnk* falls in the second of these three classes of Pahlavi writings.

As regards the style in which the work is written it is an observation very commonly made by those who have read the work in the original either in whole or in part that it is full of complications and difficulties. Dr West ascribes this characteristic to the age in which the work was written. According to him there is in the work a wordy expression of ideas which are closely put together in a rambling sort of writing and the difficulty is increased on account of the compound epithets used by the writer. He is also of opinion that the writer purposely affects an involved and obscure style. Now it is difficult for me to accept this last piece of criticism as accurately representing the motive of the author in adopting a particular style of writing. It appears as though the author was conscious of the difficulty of making himself quite intelligible and he therefore repeatedly asks to be excused for his inability.

lity to express his thoughts in language clearer than what he has employed. He says in the introduction "If what we write is not fully understood or clear, it is chiefly not owing to the incompleteness of the decision of Revelation in clearness of demonstration and correctness of meaning, but owing to our incomplete comprehension of the authoritative explanation contained in the religion." Some of the subjects which he deals with are highly abstruse and technical in their character, and you find so many synonymous words used by the writer, in different shades of meaning, that it is often difficult to grasp the distinction intended to be made by the author in those different words. It is the use of technical terms and phrases, some of which have very likely been coined by the author, that puzzles the reader. But one cannot justly say that the author is himself affecting obscurity.

Dr West also sees another fault in the style, and that is what he calls the "want of clear arrangement of thought" in the work. If you look, however, very closely into the book, I am afraid, this piece of criticism, too, will appear to you not quite just to the author. For his arrangement is quite perfect. As I pointed out to you above, the inquirers had sent in a long letter in which they had not propounded their questions categorically. The author, however, in order to be clearer, divides "the compact writing" and treats each separate subject in a distinct chapter, thus adopting the best logical method of treatment. And in the replies, if you only analyse some of the longer ones, you will find that he sticks very closely to the wording of the question, and treats the question in the most proper order. Not only that, in those cases where there are several sub-divisions in the questions he treats the different heads of the question, one after another in turn. But the difficulty of understanding one or the other word which contains some important idea, seems to have led Dr West to believe that there is no proper range of ideas in the work, for, indeed, you cannot expect the thought to become clear to

you, if you are unable to comprehend the language in which that thought is expressed. The language, no doubt is often obscure but it is a hasty conclusion to draw on that account that the method of argument adopted by the author and the arrangement of his ideas are also faulty.

As regards the subjects treated in the work, you notice a very wide range of topics dealt with. The beginning is made with a disquisition about a righteous man and his excellence above all creatures of God — truly an admirable beginning for a work on Zoroastrian Ethics at the foundation of which is the idea of *Asha* or righteousness. You then find a discussion on the question of good and evil and an explanation of the so-called "anomalies of life" where you are told that if the good man is more miserable on earth than the wicked man he may rest assured that what is a bed of thorns for him now will be converted in the life hereafter into a bed of roses. He has only to retain in his heart a hope for the best in the future — the hope which 'lives eternal in the human breast. Then there is a discussion as to whether the souls of men in the other world undergo punishments and obtain rewards for each one of their bad and good actions separately or whether they are held accountable only for the balance of good or evil which may predominate. Of course this is a question on which you can only speculate. But I believe that the answer given, under the circumstances is extremely sensible. Accord to Manuschihar the evil which is really atoned for by contrition and compensation is no longer evil. But for the rest of human actions there will be a reward and a punishment. It is not to be expected therefore that you will enter heaven by just having a bit more of good than your evil. I shall leave this subject where the author has done without saying more, because it is out and out a speculative subject.

You have also questions regarding the disposal of the dead where the Dastur is asked the question as to whether it is not

a gruesome sight to see the corpses of your near and dear departed devoured by vultures I believe that nowhere in the whole book which contains several extremely wise and sensible remarks, is there such a convincingly strong answer given, as the one in support of the prevailing Zoroastrian mode of disposal of the dead The Dastur says that the body does not feel the gnawing of the vultures, as the soul is no longer in the inert mass of matter, and therefore, all sensibility is lost in what is left And as regards the peculiar method of disposal of the dead, you are given a most beautiful analogy from nature. It is ordained by God that nothing shall go in vain The worst refuse of the kitchen serves as the best manure for the garden which produces the kitchen necessities. And, similarly, by relegating the bodies of the dead to be devoured by vultures, you increase and develop life by means of the dead life, you impart the heat of life and energy by means of the substance that has just lost its heat and energy I remember the controversy which was started a few years ago, when the *pros* and *cons* in the matter of introducing the crematorium in Bombay were discussed And I remember how an argument, from what you find in some of your traditional writings, was advanced in favour of retaining the mode of disposal of the dead now prevailing among Parsis It was argued that we have got to preserve our bones until the day of the Resurrection For it is said that on the final day the prophet Saoshyosh will come to "raise" our bones to life again, and if you introduce the crematorium, you will leave only ashes, and who knows if Saoshyosh will be blest with the superior power of bringing life into the ashes The last clause is the addition which I have introduced to complete this sublime argument based on the supreme authority of the "Revelation" spoken of in most of the Pahlavi books, where that authority is always put forward to cloak and hide from view the most glaring falsehoods and absurdities It would be far better if you do not argue a question at all, instead of facing a sceptic

or a radical with arguments which have no meaning, and which are palpably absurd. Is it possible for you to imagine that the bones will stay as they are until the day of the Resurrection, if any such a day is at all to come? The poet Long fellow said

Dust thou art and to dust thou returnest

This was not said of the soul"—

but some of our orthodox Parsis will say this was not said of the body either. The author of the *Dastastan* will not argue that way. He gives you the best argument possible in favour of the system of exposing the dead to vultures an argument that appeals to your sense of reason and not merely to your fancy and imagination.

Further on you have the discussion about the fate of the good and wicked in the other world and about the various stages of heaven and hell and the question of the extreme future discussed. These are again speculative questions and on these the ideas of Pahlavi writers are not of the best. The idea of the final body — the *tan i pasin*, and the Resurrection cannot forsake them. They are also encumbered with the difficulty of having to impart knowledge about the worlds of spirit by a material picture. Manuschihr seems to have been conscious of the difficulty and you see a good deal of moderation in his views on the subject. It is in treatment of questions of practical importance however that his *forte* lies and on such questions he gives the best advice.

In assigning the reasons for putting on the sacred shirt and thread girdle he again displays great sagacity. He does not say that this or that is so mentioned in the Revelation. But he gives some very striking reasons of his own which you may read for yourself with great interest.

Then you have some chapters on the subject of the ceremonies to be performed for the dead as well as for the living,

and also chapters relating to priests, their position, their duties, the fees to be paid to them, the treatment which ought to be accorded to them, their rights of seniority and the like. When I am on this subject, I should like particularly to refer to the answer to the forty-fifth question in the book, which asked whether priests can take to secular work, in case they do not and cannot earn a proper livelihood in their own profession. The reply says that, as far as possible, the priest should stick to his own profession, and that, understanding as he does the teachings of the religion better than laymen, he should impart a lesson to others by showing his contentment in adversity. And, therefore, he should not seek other pursuits merely for greed of gain, or for the improvement of his income. But when he cannot obtain a daily livelihood from priestly duty, and "the good do not give him chosen righteous gifts for it," a livelihood may be requested from the paid performance of ceremonies, the management of all religious rites and other priestly disciple's duty therein. But if even this source of income is insufficient, the priest may take to agriculture or sheep-rearing, penmanship or other employment among priests; failing that, he can bear arms, or go a-hunting, or take to anything befitting a warrior. In the last resource he may beg and apply for a righteous gift — the *ashodād*. I do not wish to make any comments on the views, expressed by the author. They can speak for themselves. But I should like to draw your attention to the sidelight it throws on the real duties of priests in those times. You are told now that one of the duties of priests is to officiate at ceremonies or to perform ceremonies, and you are also told that that has been the sole prerogative of priests from times immemorial. The layman's ceremonies are deemed to be invalid. He cannot officiate at ceremonies. But what do you find here? You are told that, if a priest cannot earn a sufficient livelihood by his duties, then he must seek one by the performance of ceremonies. Clearly then, the performance of

ceremonies was not his special duty and function wherewith to earn a livelihood. In modern times you continually hear appeals to educate the priesthood and to raise their social status. Instead of pursuing meaningless talk — for this talk is meaningless and is bound to remain so until you define the rights and duties of priesthood — I should wish that the question of getting up a class of real priests — ministers of the Faith, instead of mere ministers of the Altar — was seriously considered. You have unfortunately no priesthood now among you in the real sense of the word. Real priests — upholders of the Faith — among you are few and far between. Unfortunately now you really see encouraged the policy which is so strongly deprecated in the eighteenth *Fargard* of the *Vendidad*. Now at least you do call that man a priest who goes about with a *paiti-dana* (*padan*) round his face. Now you hear it asserted that it is the sole prerogative of the priesthood to perform ceremonies — that that is the priest's principal function. A thousand years ago it was only when he went out of his way to save himself from the verge of starvation that he hired himself out to perform ceremonies.

The *Datastan* also deals with the question of destiny and exertion. It is again a question of Ethics pure and simple — a practical question — and you find the most beautiful advice on this head. You are told that life, wife and child, authority and wealth are through destiny, but righteousness and wickedness are through human action and exertion. I should like to emphasize the moral truth contained in this statement. You continually hear it said that man succumbs to his surroundings, that circumstances make or mar his career in life. Place him amid good surroundings with comfort and competence and you will see the best results. But place him in discomfort and want, he takes to evil courses. But the philosophical instinct of Manushchihar would not accept this pessimistic idea of representing man as a mere helpless creature



of "fate" and of his surroundings the free-will of man and his moral actions. Whatever your circumstances, righteous or wicked as you choose, things force you to be. You are free to have freedom of the will. Exercise proper choice when you have to act. Circumstances may be, you do right or wrong. Fate weaves your texture of poetic fiction and an illusion. You have grasped the question of good and evil and human responsibility, perfect and imperfect. Therefore, on this head must be a teaching like the English poet that

"Our life's our  
Our acts our  
For good or ill"

Perhaps the word "destiny" is not quite well chosen. But you point out what takes place apart from direct circumstances over which we have no direct control. Thus the author's control over your life or existence, whether you will pass that performance of good or evil actions.

You have in the work also secular topics, such as the rainbow and the moon, the river-beds and the like. And your advice on matters of domestic regards dealings with foreigners to them or not, and the like. I have opinions of Mānuschāhar on this to point out that both the poet's treatment of these questions

principles dictated by narrow minded state-craft to the higher laws of Ethics

Then there are some questions which are not exactly religious or moral but which are considered from an ethical standpoint. Amongst them there is the economical question in regard to engrossing corn in order to raise the price of the commodity. The learned Dastur says that there is nothing morally wrong in being businesslike and therefore a shrewd merchant is not to be blamed if he buys up large quantities of corn when there is a falling market and then sells at the proper market price when the market again rises. But says he it is grossly improper to engross corn purely with a view to bring about a scarcity. He examines also especially another evil aspect of engrossing. The corn is sometimes kept away from the market so long that it gets rotten and a scarcity is thus artificially brought about. This practice of causing an artificial scarcity is reprimanded by Manuschihar and he holds it unlawful and immoral. But there is a limitation to the rule against engrossing commodities for the sake of earning large profits. It is the duty of the legislature to protect life and therefore it can take measures to see that the necessities of life are obtained at a reasonable price. But it is not its business to settle the price of those commodities which do not fall under the class of necessities. This is the opinion of Manuschihar and I believe you will be struck by its close agreement with the opinions of the best economists of modern times.

You have also a few chapters on the question of family rights — guardianship, inheritance succession and adoption. On all these questions you gain the best and most rational advice. For instance as in works of modern jurisprudence, you are told that a will made when a man is in great agony and distress so as to have almost lost his consciousness is to be disregarded especially when you see an undue preference given to some one heir — a preference which you would not

expect the testator to give, if under ordinary circumstances, he was to dispose of his property by will. Such is the teaching of the *Dāstastān* on this head. Then you have rules about the shares of the next-of-kin in the estate of a relative who dies intestate. You are told that the share of the widow should be twice that of a daughter. This is what you find also in modern Parsi Law. According to the *Dāstastān*, even the son is not entitled to anything more than the widow. For his share is also said to be half that of the widow. And there is a further distinction that the son who is blind or unprovided for, should get twice as much as one who is blest with vision and also otherwise well provided for. These rules appear to have a greater tinge of morality about them, than the modern rules about partition and inheritance prevailing among Parsis. The modern rules have been affected by the principle which is certainly foreign to old Parsi tradition — the principle which gives an undue preference to the son over all other heirs.

The rules about family guardianship are also worthy of notice. They advise you to have a guardian for the care both of the person and property of minors who are left unprotected by the death of some elderly member of the family. But I should particularly like to draw your attention to the rules about adoption contained in the *Dāstastān*. According to modern notions, it is but essential that a son should be named in adoption to any man who dies at or above the age of fifteen, leaving no male issue. The idea was borrowed largely from the Hindu tradition on the subject. The Hindu believes in the spiritual efficacy of having male offspring, and if he does not have a natural offspring, he must have a substitute, — if he has no *putra* he must adopt one as a *putrachhāyā*. A somewhat similar notion appears to prevail amongst uninformed Parsis even to-day, and you will often have noticed how superstitious people, and also some of those people whom you tolerate being called your priests, approach the bedside

of the wretched sufferer in the throes of death and officiously din into his unconscious ear that proper precautions would be taken to name a son in adoption to him and that he may die in peace and contentment for, to be sure his course in the spiritual world would be easy. This is entirely a Hindu idea and you cannot expect to find it in Persia. In the *Dastan* you are told that there is to be no adoption at all to a man who has not property yielding an income of at least 60 stirrs, which amount according to Dr West is about the same as eighty Rupees. Then you are also told that there is to be no adoption when there are grown up daughters capable of managing the estate — and also not even when daughters are incapable of managing property in case they are married to capable husbands who are alive at the death of the last incumbent of the property. You are also told that where there is a family guardian there is to be no adoption. Adoption is, in fact to be resorted to only for the protection and management of property. And hence the adopted son must not be an infant according to the teachings of Manuschihr. Preference was to be given to a near kinsman and especially to the son-in-law or daughter's son of the deceased. In modern times, however the family in which the daughter is married is resorted to in the very last instance. An unfortunate idea borrowed again from the Hindus prevails that with the family that has as it were deprived you of the company of your daughter — that has, as it were robbed you of her you should have no dealings.

How often do you find in these enlightened times the whole rationale of the idea of adoption set at naught, and the farce gone through of naming an infant, oftener than not, one who is yet unable to discriminate between right and wrong as an adopted son! And how often do you see the adopted son's status absolutely unchanged, not an iota of his civil rights affected! All that you see is that in ceremonials he is named with his adoptive father though he is not even compelled to

bear the name of his adoptive father in his secular concerns. Witness the difference between this meaningless practice and the advice you find in the *Dāstastān*. You often hear the reformer who preaches reason, charged with having no regard for old time-honoured customs. No one had a greater regard for time-honoured customs than the author of the *Dāstastān*, and he preached adherence to customs with a vehemence all his own. Notice the strong censure he administers to his own brother for attempting to innovate on ancient usage and practice. But there is one reservation he makes, which must be noted. He says that a custom must be maintained, unless there are special reasons against it. Here is struck the keynote of the respect due to old usage. The usage must be as *reasonable* as it has to be old, in order to be respected. Can you say of your modern usage regarding adoption that it is reasonable? Why then maintain it? But there is also another teaching of Mānuschihar which might profitably be followed. And that is that the older authority ought to be preferred to one more recent. Now here you have in the *Dāstastān* the record of an older usage, for the author of the *Dāstastān*, according to his own admission, records the opinions of the leaders of the religion who lived before his time, thus making you acquainted with the usage of times of which you have no memory. Surely, then, the older usage ought to be preferred to the one which is evidently more recent, especially because, at least in its teachings on this question of adoption, it has reason on its side.

I have given you now a few characteristic examples from the teachings contained in this great Pahlavī work — the *Dāstastān*. You see how the ideas on practical subjects and on ethical doctrines, are tinged with a sterling common sense, how you see displayed therein an abundance of practical wisdom and worldly knowledge, and a process of reasoning, at times as perfect as you can expect. But I must say that this

judgment and criticism applies only to that part of the book which deals with worldly questions and with questions relating to Ethics pure and simple. In the treatment of questions of that character the author shows an ability which excites the admiration and esteem of the reader. But you cannot give the same verdict with reference to his treatment of polemical questions referring to matters pertaining to the realms beyond. His speculations on the ideas about heaven and hell the final body and the Resurrection are tinged with the spirit of the time and some of the teachings on that head require implicit readiness to believe before you can accept them. But on the whole you cannot but admire the work which is bound to repay the trouble of going through it. You will notice also how versatile must have been the genius of the author who is able to impart such solid information on such a wide range of topics — on questions pertaining to morals on economics on law and even on the natural sciences. Truly you can say that Manuschihar really deserved to be the *pashupat* — the leader of religion — at the time and that he was an *utthiravan* in the best and noblest sense of the term. The tone of his writing is also very moderate. The conscious but just pride of knowledge does show itself off prominently but there is at the same time the kindly readiness to impart that knowledge to his flock. Very likely we may almost say decisively the *Dastan* must have been written before the *Listles* wherein the author declares himself to be an old man and where he speaks with a tone of authority which his venerable age must have won for him. I should like to draw your attention also to the staunch orthodoxy of the author who has as you have seen a conservative ring about him. But you cannot disregard the fact that although he set his face very strongly against what he believed were dangerous innovations he was quite liberal and rational at heart. He does not continually refer to miracles as so many other Pahlavi writers are found to have done, when

they were at a loss for argument. • But there is always some rational argument advanced, and a "positive" method adopted by Mānuschihar in support of what he says.

I might now compare the *Dātastān* with a few of the more important and well-known Pahlavi writings. If you compare it with the *Dīnkard*, you notice, first of all, that in the latter work there is a mass of matter ranged together in no particular order, even the same subject appearing over and over again in the different books into which the voluminous work is divided. The author of the *Dātastān* is one well-known celebrity, whereas the *Dīnkard* is a compilation of the writings of many men, and although the names of some of those who seem to have taken a part in the compilation, are known to us — notably that of Dastur Ādar Farnbag Farkhozād, you have no information as to which individual portion was the work of any particular individual writer. Just as the *Dātastān* is written in answer to certain questions of difficulty propounded to the writer, so also in the major portion of the *Dīnkard* you find numerous questions replied to in different parts of the work. But there is this difference in the questions that, whereas in the case of the *Dātastān* they are put by an inquiring flock to the Dastur, with the honest motive of seeking knowledge, almost all the questions in the *Dīnkard* are put by apostates and heretics and aliens whose object is to challenge the excellence of the Zoroastrian religion. Whereas the questions in the *Dātastān* come *en bloc* from the members of the community, those in the *Dīnkard* come severally from different people and at different times, and in all probability the answers are also given by different authorities. There is also a remarkable difference noticeable in the way in which the answers are given. You often find questions in the *Dīnkard* not properly replied to, but very often there is a wordy eloquence without much meaning, by means of which the minds of the listeners were evidently

bought to be shifted away from the question. Very likely, the answers in the *Dinkard* were given orally and on the spur of the moment whereas those in the *Datastan* were from the beginning set down in writing and given after mature deliberation. That is the reason why the value of the answers contained in the *Datastan* is decidedly greater.

If you compare the *Datastan* with the *Artu Viraf Namak*, you again see that the author of the latter work is entirely unknown, unless you come to a different conclusion from the fact mentioned in one part of the work that some people called Viraf by the name of Nishapuhr. As regards the work itself the *Artu Viraf Namak* appears to have been written with the express object of bringing round those who had become entire sceptics and of reviving their faith in the Mazdayasnian religion. So that, although both Manuschihar and Viraf write in order to instruct the people of Iran yet the former writes to people who accept his authority and are ready to accept his teaching, if he can only make it clear to them whereas Viraf's work being much more difficult, he has to take recourse to a miracle, and he therefore, communicates all his information under the representation that it was what he had actually seen and heard in the spiritual worlds. The whole of the *Artu Viraf Namak* is a piece of dogmatism. Certain things are good and others are evil because that is so held in the councils of the other world. Such is Viraf's reasoning. But in the *Datastan* no statement is made and no opinion given without some positive reason advanced for what is said. Viraf professes to derive his knowledge from the spirits. Manuschihar professes to teach from what he has learnt in the sayings and writings of his predecessors. In other words Manuschihar's sources of knowledge are human Viraf's sources are all superhuman. Both writers emphasize the Avestic injunction *Acrō pantao yo ashihē vispē anyao apantao* " (There is but one path, that of piety all others are no paths.) Viraf says that is the



special lesson communicated to him by Ahura Mazda Himself, and he places it at the end of his teachings as the motto which men must ever hold before their eyes. Mānuschihar also quotes this same formula, at the end of the *Dātastān* and towards the close of each of his *Epistles*. But he never dogmatises with it, he is always ready to give his reasons for the statement, and he explains what really is the "one path"—the path of righteousness.

The *Dīnā-i-Manyū-i-Khrat* is another work of some importance which may be compared to the *Dātastān*. That work is in the form of a parable in which fictitious characters are introduced in the shape of a "spirit of wisdom" who undertakes to answer the 62 questions of a sage. There is thus the framework of a fiction in the work, whereas in the *Dātastān* all the personages are real. The author of the *Mīnoē Kherad* is also unknown. The topics dealt with are all of a religious and moral character, and there is no admixture of anything like what may be called strictly secular topics. There is not much to choose between the *Mīnoē Kherad* and the *Dātastān* regarding the teachings given, for they are much the same in both works.

Then you have another Pahlavi work of importance—the *Shikand Gūmānik Vījār*—whose author is known and whose date can also be fixed somewhere in the latter part of the ninth century A. D., so that it is a work contemporaneous with the *Dātastān*. Unfortunately, the last portion of the work is entirely lost, in the same way as some portions of the *Dīnkard*. In the case of the *Dātastān*, we find the work preserved in its entirety, though the abrupt transition from the subject discussed in the ninety-second question to the concluding remarks may lead you to suspect that some part may be missing. The style of the *Dātastān* is quite didactic, whereas the author of the *Shikand Gūmānik Vījār* is always debating and arguing the *pros* and *cons* of every question. The latter work is written not so much to instruct the faith-

ful as to refute the various notions prevailing at the time. And you are struck with the warmth and force with which the author meets the contentions of atheists and materialists and the heresies of Mani. The style is much too forcible so forcible that the teaching of Mānūschihār falls flat before it. The logic is quite overpowering. But the force is justified by the occasion and it was just what was required to carry out the intention of the writer to bring the heretics and apostates to their senses. However there is a limited scope of subjects dealt with — a disquisition about good and evil and other hundred questions in the treatment of which the author often indulges in a fling at some of the inconsistencies which he points out in the Qoran and the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. But the narrower range of subjects enables the author to give a much more exhaustive treatment of them than what you find in the *Datāstan*.

The *Datāstan* may also be compared to the *Bundahishn* which is again a pretty voluminous work. Perhaps you can safely say that the nature of this work is quite different from that of the *Datāstan*. For whereas the former professes to give comprehensively the knowledge derived from tradition about the whole of creation — its origin, development and end together with a few references to the origin of evil etc., the latter is limited to the exposition of a few select topics of inquiry. That work is full of scientific inaccuracies, and unfortunately it tells a large number of untruths in the name of what is called Revelation in the book. There are all sorts of fanciful ideas in the work such as you can never expect in a matter of fact work like the *Datāstan*. But you feel interested all the same in reading the imaginary notions contained therein on matters which have by this time been well elucidated by science. I do not propose to take up your time any further by comparing the *Datāstan* with the mere moral sermons which you find in smaller works like the *Pand Namak* of Ādarbad and the rest. These latter works are

meant more for impressing boys and girls with the excellence of leading a pious life than for imparting any information on the more difficult philosophical questions, some of which are treated in the *Dātastān*. Nor do I wish to trouble you with the "Revelations" and predictions contained in the *Zend-i-Vohuman Yasht*, as to what shall come to pass hereafter in the "iron age". This last work is evidently against the teachings and main spirit of the Avesta which believes in the continual advance and progress of men in the world, until they are able to effect perfection and bring about the *Frashakereti*. But the *Zend-i-Vohuman Yasht* is pessimistic and says that every day man is degenerating, that the golden and silver ages are gone, and that man is fast descending into the ages of steel and iron, so that it will be a hard task for Saoshyosh and his band of associates — nothing short of a miracle — to bring about a "Renovation" on the day of the Resurrection. And according to the writer of the *Yasht*, man will be so corrupted at the time that he will have to go through a purgation, to pass through an ordeal of molten brass, before he will be allowed to live again on earth after the Resurrection of the dead. I need not say that such a transparent opposition to the spirit of the Avestan teachings is never met with in the sober teachings of the *Dātastān*. I shall close my theme here, leaving you to draw the general conclusion.

